

Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 4, Hosea 5

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 4, Hosea 5, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This transcription of a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt **explains** Hosea chapter 5, **focusing** on the spiritual and political leaders' failures. Oswalt **argues** that their self-serving actions, described as "prostitution" against their covenant with God, resulted from a lack of genuine faith and love. He **connects** this to the broader human problem of self-centeredness and the importance of seeking God's will instead of self-reliance. Finally, Oswalt **highlights** God's ultimate desire for restoration rather than destruction, using the analogy of Hosea's relationship with Gomer.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 4 – 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. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 4, Hosea 5

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea 5:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea 5

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and concepts explored in Dr. Oswalt's lecture on Hosea chapter 5. The lecture focuses on the failures of Israelite leadership, their spiritual corruption, and God's response. Dr. Oswalt emphasizes the concept of a "spirit of prostitution" that underlies their actions and its implications for understanding both ancient Israel and our own lives today. He also highlights the difference between genuine relationship with God and transactional, self-serving religion, and stresses that God's ultimate desire is always restoration, not destruction.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Leadership Failure:

- Hosea holds the priests and royal house accountable for the state of the nation. They should be leading and teaching the covenant: "Who does Hosea hold responsible for the situation in the country? The priests and the royal house. The spiritual leaders and the political leaders."
- These leaders should be embodying justice, mercy, and kindness, placing the needs of their people above their own: "They should be caring more for their people than they should be for themselves."
- Instead, they are self-serving, using their positions to enrich themselves and their own power.
- They are compared to "a snare at Mizpah," trapping and exploiting the people "for their own purposes."
- Hosea condemns them for "slaughter" and for acting like a "net" or a "snare" toward their own people.

1. **Spiritual Prostitution:**

- Israel's behavior is described as "prostitution," not just adultery, to emphasize the purely transactional nature of their relationship with God: "Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution. Your religion is simply for the purpose of using God for what you want, and that kind of religion only wants your cash."
- Unlike adultery, which implies some element of relationship, prostitution is devoid of true love or connection. It is purely about self-gratification and manipulation: "Adultery at least has some element of relationship, some element of love. Prostitution, zero."
- The "spirit of prostitution" is linked to self-centeredness and the desire to use God for personal gain: "A spirit of prostitution loves lies more than it loves the truth."
- This "spirit" is also tied to original sin, as humans are naturally inclined to seek their own way rather than God's: "There is a spirit within us that is contrary to faithfulness."
- This spirit manifests as a desire to warp reality and define needs apart from God: "The spirit of prostitution says I can warp reality to my own benefit... There is no truth to challenge me."

1. **The Nature of True Relationship with God:**

- Dr. Oswalt contrasts the self-serving behavior of the Israelites with genuine faith, characterized by self-giving, self-denying love. "What kind of fruit? Love. Self-giving, self-denying love, which is in fact really the only kind of love there is."
- He uses the analogy of a marriage to illustrate the ideal relationship with God – it should be characterized by steadfast love and loyalty.
- True faithfulness is not just about external actions (like church attendance), but about a submitted spirit and knowing God's truth, even when it's difficult or challenging: "What about my spirit? Is my spirit His?"
- He quotes Malachi: "Guard your spirit, therefore, and be no longer treacherous. Where does divorce begin? It begins in your spirit."
- The evidence of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of faithfulness and genuine love, particularly when it is not convenient: "The Holy Spirit will give us faithfulness when it doesn't pay."

1. Idolatry and its Manifestations:

- Idolatry isn't simply worshiping statues, but it also encompasses the desire to use worldly things for personal benefit rather than glorifying God: "You don't have to have a little statue in your closet to be an idolater. I want the gifts. Forget the giver."
- The Israelites are guilty of seeking "Jesus and" – that is, they are not rejecting God but are using him for their own needs while also relying on other things: "They want Yahweh and Baal."
- They are using rituals for their own benefit and as a means of manipulating God: "The pagan understanding is ritual makes it happen...The biblical ritual reflects the reality of the relationship."
- The legitimate children they give birth to are compromised versions of true faith: "They give birth to illegitimate children."

1. God's Response and Ultimate Goal:

- God's actions are portrayed using powerful metaphors: He will be "a flood" (overwhelming), a "moth" and "rot" (gradually destroying), and a "lion" (devouring). "Now, how does God describe himself? ...A flood... a moth and rot... A lion."
- These actions, though destructive, are ultimately motivated by God's desire to bring the people to repentance: "Why is he doing this? ... To get them to return."
- The lecture ends by emphasizing that God's intended last word is never destruction: "God's intended last word is never destruction. Never. That may be the last word, but that's up to you. It's not his intent."
- The example of Hosea buying Gomer back from slavery highlights God's desire to restore the relationship with His people.
- **Judah's Complicity:** While Hosea is known as a prophet to Israel, he also includes Judah in his critique. Although they do not share Israel's specific sins (golden calves), they are still implicated in similar patterns of idolatry and lack of genuine devotion. "Judah also stumbles with them."
- They are "warming up" to the same wrong ideas and the same "prostitutional idea" as Israel. "The seed had sprung up into a plant in Israel. But the same seed is planted in the ground of Judah."

- They are warned that they will eventually outpace Israel in their unfaithfulness.

Quotes for Emphasis:

- "They should be caring more for their people than they should be for themselves. What's going on here is exactly the human problem. I am God. Get out of my way."
- "Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution. Your religion is simply for the purpose of using God for what you want, and that kind of religion only wants your cash."
- "A spirit of prostitution loves lies more than it loves the truth."
- "I want the gifts. Forget the giver."
- "The biblical ritual reflects the reality of the relationship...Here, the relationship is first, and the ritual reflects it."
- "God's intended last word is never destruction. Never. That may be the last word, but that's up to you. It's not his intent."

Conclusion:

Dr. Oswalt's analysis of Hosea 5 provides a powerful look into the nature of idolatry and spiritual infidelity. The lecture connects the ancient context of the Israelites' failures to modern applications, challenging listeners to examine their own hearts and relationships with God. It highlights the critical distinction between a self-serving approach to faith and the self-denying love that characterizes a genuine relationship with God. The message is clear: God desires a true relationship with us, and He will work to bring us back to that, even when our hearts are far from him.

4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 4, Hosea 5

Hosea Chapter 5 Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Hosea, who is primarily responsible for the negative state of Israel? The priests and the royal house are held responsible. They are meant to uphold the covenant, which includes loyalty to Yahweh and love for others.
2. What does the prophet Hosea mean when he uses the term "prostitution" in reference to Israel's actions? Hosea uses "prostitution" to describe Israel's relationship with God. It is transactional and self-serving. They are using God for their own benefit, just as a prostitute seeks payment.
3. What is the difference between adultery and prostitution in the context of the covenant relationship? Adultery implies a broken relationship with a level of love, whereas prostitution is purely transactional with no relationship or love involved. Prostitution is self-serving and seeks to produce no children, whereas children are a potential outcome of adultery.
4. How does a "spirit of prostitution" relate to the concept of original sin? A "spirit of prostitution," characterized by self-centeredness and seeking personal gain, is similar to the original sin of putting one's needs before God. It is a desire to warp reality to one's own benefit.
5. According to the lecture, what is one way to know if you are led by the Holy Spirit? If we are led by the Holy Spirit, our lives will be characterized by self-giving and self-denying love. Additionally, we will be faithful even when it doesn't pay off.
6. What is the relationship between arrogance and a spirit of prostitution? Arrogance and a spirit of prostitution are related because when a person puts themselves first, they do not have to rely on God. They believe they know what they need, and they know how to meet those needs.
7. Why does Hosea include Judah in his message of judgment, even though Judah does not have idols like Israel? Judah is included because, though it is not as outwardly sinful as Israel, it is still falling into the same self-serving attitudes and behaviors as the north. The "seed" of a spirit of prostitution is also in Judah.

8. What does the lecturer suggest is the difference between ritual from a pagan viewpoint and the biblical viewpoint? Pagan rituals are meant to make something happen, like obtaining a blessing, while biblical rituals are meant to reflect an already existing relationship between God and the worshiper. Therefore, relationship is primary for the biblical view.
9. How does the lecture explain the various images God uses to describe himself in this chapter? God uses images like a flood, moth/rot, and lion to illustrate the way that he feels he is required to act. God will do whatever it takes to bring Israel and Judah back to him. They are intended to be destructive and yet, restorative.
10. What is the last word that God intends, according to the lecture? According to the lecture, God's last intended word is never destruction. God's intention is restoration, however, this is contingent upon people choosing to turn to him.

Essay Questions

1. Explore the metaphor of marriage and prostitution in Hosea 5. How does this imagery help us understand the nature of Israel's sin and its impact on their relationship with God?
2. Analyze the role of leadership, both political and religious, as presented in Hosea 5. How do the actions of these leaders contribute to the downfall of Israel, and what lessons can be learned from their failure?
3. Discuss the concept of a "spirit of prostitution" as it relates to the idea of original sin. How does Hosea 5 explain the tendency for individuals to prioritize their desires over their relationship with God?
4. Examine the importance of truth and faithfulness in Hosea 5. How does the pursuit of self-interest and the embrace of lies undermine a genuine relationship with God, and what implications does this have for believers today?
5. Consider the final message of hope presented in Hosea 5, emphasizing that God's last word is never destruction. How does this statement reconcile God's judgment and intention for restoration, and what does it tell us about his nature?

Glossary

- **Beth-Avon:** A mocking name for Bethel, meaning "house of wickedness," in contrast to its original name, "house of God."
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or treaty, particularly between God and His people, outlining the terms of their relationship.
- **Ephraim:** The name often used to refer to the northern kingdom of Israel, as Ephraim was the most prominent tribe.
- **Gilgal:** A location in the border area between the northern and southern kingdoms, referenced by Hosea.
- **Gibeah:** A town located in the border area in southern Israel.
- **Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity; in this lecture, a source of true faithfulness and the opposite of the "spirit of prostitution."
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or anything that is put before God.
- **Mizpah:** A location, or two possible locations in Israel, used as an example of sin and corruption in Hosea 5.
- **Original Sin:** The inherited tendency in humans to put oneself first, a self-centeredness that separates humanity from God; a theme in this lecture.
- **Prostitution (in this context):** An image used to describe Israel's self-serving relationship with God, devoid of genuine love or commitment, using God for their own benefit.
- **Ramah:** A town located just beneath the border in Judah, referenced by Hosea.
- **Ritual:** A set of actions or a ceremony performed according to a prescribed order. In this lecture, ritual is either a means to an end, or a reflection of an already existing relationship.
- **Royal House:** The ruling family or political leadership of Israel.
- **Spirit of Prostitution:** The state of being self-centered and seeking personal gain; an attitude that opposes true faithfulness to God.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of the God of Israel, often used to emphasize His role in the covenant relationship.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 4, Hosea 5, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Hosea 5 and the Nature of Faithfulness

1. **Who does Hosea primarily blame for the problems in Israel and Judah, and why?** Hosea primarily blames the priests, the royal house, and other leaders (including prophets elsewhere). He holds them accountable because they are responsible for upholding the covenant between God and his people. They should be leading by example in honoring the covenant terms which include loyalty to God and love/justice toward their fellow people. Instead, they are self-serving and prioritize their own enrichment over the well-being of their people.
2. **What are the core elements of the covenant that the leaders are neglecting?** The core elements of the covenant, as outlined in the Ten Commandments, are loyalty to Yahweh and love for others. This love involves treating others with justice, mercy, and kindness, mirroring how God treats us, as we are made in His image. These leaders should be sacrificing their self-interests for the needs of their people.
3. **Why does Hosea use the image of "prostitution" to describe Israel's unfaithfulness to God?** The image of prostitution is used instead of adultery because it emphasizes the transactional and non-relational nature of Israel's relationship with God. Adultery implies a broken bond of love and relationship, whereas prostitution highlights the pursuit of self-gratification and the desire to "use" God for personal gain. Prostitution aims at immediate gratification and not a long-term, committed relationship that will bear fruit (children).
4. **What is the "spirit of prostitution," and how does it relate to original sin?** The "spirit of prostitution" is a self-centered attitude that seeks to manipulate and use God and others for personal benefit. It is characterized by a lack of faithfulness, a preference for lies over truth, and a desire to warp reality to one's own advantage. It relates to original sin by reflecting the inherent human tendency to prioritize self over God and to try and meet our own needs rather than trust God to do it. This spirit leads to a lack of genuine knowledge of God because it rejects the truth and challenges He presents.

5. **How does the concept of "truth" tie into the discussion of faithfulness and the spirit of prostitution?** Truth is central because the spirit of prostitution loves lies and attempts to warp reality for selfish purposes. The person who is unfaithful seeks to manipulate, whereas the faithful seek honesty and truth. Truth challenges the self-serving nature of the spirit of prostitution, highlighting the need for accountability. To truly know God, who is truth, one must reject the lies associated with a self-serving attitude.
6. **Why does Hosea include Judah in his condemnation when they are not practicing idolatry to the same extent as Israel?** Hosea includes Judah because they were warming up to the same wrong ideas as Israel, showing the early signs of the same "prostitutional" attitude. Although they did not have golden calves, they had a similar spirit of self-serving ambition, which was a seed of unfaithfulness waiting to grow into a full plant. He recognized they would follow the same path to self-destruction in time.
7. **What does it mean to truly "seek" the Lord, and what is the difference between seeking and really seeking?** To truly seek the Lord means to genuinely seek relationship with God, submitting to his will, and loving Him above all else. It goes beyond superficial religious practices. Really seeking means seeking Him for who He is and not for what one can get out of Him. Those who are really seeking are submitted to His will and not trying to twist His actions to their own will and plans. The difference between "seeking" and "really seeking" is the genuineness of that seek and the humility that motivates it.
8. **How does God's approach toward Israel and Judah demonstrate his ultimate goal, and what role do they play in it?** God's approach, which includes using imagery like a flood, moth/rot, and a lion, is intended to bring Israel and Judah to repentance and reconciliation with Him. Despite the judgment and discipline, his intended last word is never destruction. His aim is to get them to recognize their guilt, admit it, and earnestly seek his face, thereby restoring the relationship. This demonstrates his desire for their redemption which can only be achieved by their free choice to return to him.