

Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 6, Hosea 7

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 6, Hosea 7, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. John Oswalt's lecture analyzes Hosea chapter 7, focusing on the **spiritual and political decay of Israel**. He connects the chaotic succession of Israelite kings with the people's **moral failings and rejection of God**, highlighting their misplaced faith in foreign alliances and their belief in their own self-sufficiency. Oswalt uses the imagery of fire and heat to depict Israel's **consuming passions and idolatry**, contrasting it with God's enduring love and desire for repentance. The lecture concludes with a call to **personal accountability and a reliance on God** amidst societal chaos, drawing parallels to contemporary societal issues.

**2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 6 – 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 6, Hosea 7

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea 7:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea 7

Overview:

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on Hosea 7, exploring the socio-political and spiritual climate of Israel during the prophet's time. He highlights the rapid succession of unstable leadership, widespread corruption, spiritual apathy, and the nation's misguided reliance on foreign alliances instead of God. He draws parallels to contemporary society, urging self-reflection and a return to God.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Political Instability and Moral Decay:

- **Rapid Kingly Succession:** Oswalt details the tumultuous period after Jeroboam II's long reign, marked by assassinations and short-lived rulers like Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah. This unstable political environment reflects a deep-seated moral decay in the nation.
- *"So, in a year, in the year 750, you had three kings."*
- **Co-regencies and Factionalism:** The constant power struggles are evident through numerous co-regencies, where different factions within the government seemed to be forcing sons onto the older king as foreign policy shifted.
- *"So, you've got from Uzziah down through Hezekiah, you've got at least four co-regencies, where again and again, the various factions in the government seemed to be forcing the sons on the older king, as their foreign policy shifted back and forth."*
- **Wicked Leadership:** Kings are depicted as being delighted in the wickedness of their people, creating a system where they are unaccountable and can manipulate their citizens. The leadership is described as "drunkards" more focused on self-indulgence than on the well-being of their people or adherence to God's covenant.
- *"They delight in the wickedness of their people."*

- *"If the people were adhering to the covenant they would be in a position to demand that the king adhere to the covenant... But if they are deeply admired in wickedness then they're going to be in no position to challenge his perversion of leadership."*
- **Loss of Ethical and Religious Anchors:** Oswalt connects the chaotic political state to the people's separation of ethics from religion, leading to a situation where they are no longer internally inclined to obey the law. This parallels modern issues such as theft and lack of moral accountability.
- *"Again, this tragedy is when ethics and religion are separated from one another... How many policemen does it take to enforce the law when the people have finally come to the place where they do not have an inner inclination to obey the law?"*

1. **Spiritual Apathy and the Illusion of God's Ignorance:**

- **Ignoring God's Presence and Judgment:** The people of Israel act as though God does not know or care about their actions. They are described as living with a "seared conscience," believing there are no consequences for their sins.
- *"But they don't realize that I remember all their evil deeds. Their sins engulf them. They're always before them. What do the people seem to be thinking? God doesn't see. God doesn't know what's going on."*
- **Remembering vs. Knowing:** Oswalt differentiates between God merely "knowing" and "remembering" their sins. Remembering implies a deeper, more personal engagement and involvement of God with their actions.
- *"There's a difference between remembering and just knowing. ... Remembering is more significant... It's a deeper engagement with what's going on..."*

1. **Misdirected Passion and the Consequences of Sin:**

- **Fiery Imagery of Sin:** The imagery of an overheated oven and fire symbolizes Israel's burning, misdirected passion, which is focused on idols and worldly desires rather than a covenant with God. This passion leads to destruction, both personally and nationally.
- *"Their hearts are like an oven... They approach him with intrigue. Their passion smolders all night. In the morning, it blazes like a flaming fire."*

- **Escalation of Sin:** Oswalt points out humanity's tendency to constantly seek greater thrills and intensify sinful behaviors, creating a dangerous cycle of escalating wickedness.
- *"...the amazing, amazing capacity of the human being to constantly up the ante. If this gives me a thrill, how about that? And if that gives me a thrill, how about this?"*
- **Sin as Distortion:** He emphasizes that sin is ultimately a distorted relationship with God and others, and this distortion has devastating impacts on personal and societal life.
- *"Over and over as you talked about that burning of, and it's the same framework that Malachi gives when the Holy Fire comes with the burning of distorted sin. Sin is distorted relationship."*

1. **Misplaced Trust and the Futility of Foreign Alliances:**

- **Seeking Help from Other Nations Instead of God:** Faced with political crises, Israel abandons God and seeks alliances with foreign nations, notably Egypt. This choice, rather than returning to God, leads to further decline and vulnerability.
- *"Ephraim mixes with the nations... If the kings can't do it, then foreign nations can do it for us."*
- **Ignoring the Signs of Decline:** The "gray hair" metaphor depicts Israel's gradual decline that they fail to acknowledge. They are like "foolish old men" who think they are still young and invincible. Foreign alliances only accelerate this decline.
- *"Foreigners sack his strength. But he doesn't realize his hair is sprinkled with gray. That's interesting, isn't it? But he doesn't notice."*
- **The Danger of Making God a Last Resort:** Oswalt cautions against treating God as a backup plan after all other options have failed. He suggests that this approach may be too late to prevent disaster.
- *"It's very, very easy to make God the last resort... Finally, when those don't work, then maybe turn to God. Or maybe it'll be too late."*

1. **The Importance of Turning to God**

- **The Repeated Failure to Return:** A central point is the people's repeated failure to turn back to God (shub). They are repeatedly characterized by not turning to the Lord, not calling on Him, and not crying out to Him from the heart.

- *"They do not return to the Lord his God or search for Him... They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail on their bed... They turn away from me... They do not turn to the most high."*
- **Consequences of Disobedience:** Oswalt emphasizes that defying the Creator leads to inevitable suffering. God's actions are not arbitrary but are a result of the natural order of the world.
- *"The world is so made that if we live in defiance of the Creator, it's going to hurt. ...unless you turn to me, it's going to hurt. This is not an arbitrary tyrant... This is the Creator saying you were made to walk in certain ways. You don't walk in those ways. It's not going to work."*
- **God's Desire to Redeem:** Despite their rebellion, God desires to redeem them, however, they misrepresent Him and His intentions.
- *"I long to redeem them, but they speak about me falsely."*

Contemporary Relevance:

Oswalt draws parallels between ancient Israel and modern society, highlighting the dangers of political corruption, spiritual apathy, and reliance on worldly solutions instead of God. He stresses the importance of maintaining a relationship with the covenant and recognizing the limitations of human leaders and political systems. He challenges listeners to examine their own lives and to consider whether they, like ancient Israel, are acting as if God is unaware or uncaring.

Actionable Insights:

- **Self-Reflection:** We must examine our own lives for any areas where we might be acting as though God doesn't see or care.
- **Prioritize God:** Make God the first resort, not the last resort, in our lives.
- **Seek Truth:** Acknowledge and turn away from our sins and return to God, the true source of our strength.
- **Engage Responsibly:** Understand that political solutions are not ultimate and that lasting change comes from a spiritual transformation grounded in a relationship with God.
- **Embrace the Gospel:** Understand that we are all caught in the cycle of sin, but that Jesus Christ offers redemption.

- **Live by Covenant:** Nurture our relationship with God's covenant so we have a gyroscope against the world's lies.

Conclusion:

Dr. Oswalt's analysis of Hosea 7 offers a powerful warning about the consequences of political instability, spiritual apathy, and misplaced trust. He challenges us to examine ourselves and return to the true source of life and strength: God. The problems of ancient Israel are not distant historical events, but reflections of timeless challenges that continue to plague humanity. By understanding and heeding the lessons of Hosea 7, we can avoid the pitfalls of the past and move forward with faith and purpose.

4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 6, Hosea 7

Hosea Chapter 7 Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What was the political situation in Israel after the reign of Jeroboam II, and what was unique about it?
2. According to Hosea 7, what specific sins were the people of Israel engaging in, and what did they seem to believe about God's knowledge of their actions?
3. How does the imagery of fire and a hot oven reflect the state of the people and their leaders in Hosea 7?
4. What does the text suggest about the relationship between the people's wickedness and the king's behavior?
5. What is the significance of the imagery of the gray hair in verse 9?
6. Why does the prophet criticize Israel's alliances with foreign nations, and which nation is specifically mentioned as the last resort?
7. According to the text, what specific action do the people of Israel repeatedly fail to do, and what Hebrew word is used to describe this failure?
8. What analogy does the text use to describe the people of Israel in verse 11, highlighting their lack of sense?
9. According to the text, what false things do the people of Israel say about God?
10. What imagery does Hosea use in verse 16 to describe Israel's relationship with God?

Quiz Answer Key

1. After Jeroboam II's long reign, there was a rapid succession of kings, including multiple assassinations and a period of dual kingship with Menahem and Pekah ruling simultaneously. This period was marked by political instability and violence.
2. The people were engaging in deceit, theft, and robbery, and they acted as though God did not see or know their evil deeds. They behaved as if there was no ultimate punishment or consequences for their actions.

3. The imagery of fire and a hot oven conveys the intense, misdirected passion and lust of the people, particularly their zeal for idols and political intrigue, lacking any true spiritual fire or relationship with God.
4. The kings of Israel seem to delight in the wickedness of the people because it allows them to maintain power and leverage, since the people's corruption prevents them from holding the king accountable to the covenant.
5. The gray hair symbolizes Israel's gradual decline and loss of strength, like an old man failing to realize his waning power, indicating they are in a state of decay they fail to acknowledge.
6. The prophet criticizes alliances with foreign nations because they represent a failure to rely on God, with Egypt being the last resort, symbolizing a return to the place of their past suffering and bondage.
7. The people repeatedly fail to turn to the Lord their God, which is described with the Hebrew word "shub", emphasizing the need for a complete change of direction in life.
8. The people are described as "silly, witless doves," illustrating that they are aimlessly flitting from one bad decision to another, lacking direction or a fixed purpose.
9. The people falsely say that God doesn't love them, that He doesn't hear or care about them, that He's forgotten them, and that He can't protect them or resolve their situation.
10. Hosea uses the imagery of a faulty bow to describe Israel's relationship with God: it cannot be relied upon, has failed and will not function correctly, and will cause the leaders to fall.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the political instability in Israel during the time of Hosea, as described in the lecture, and how it relates to the people's spiritual condition as discussed in Hosea 7.
2. Discuss the theme of "remembering" versus "knowing" as it relates to God's relationship with Israel in Hosea 7. Explain how this relates to how God deals with sin.
3. How does the imagery of fire and heat, particularly the "oven," function in Hosea 7 to illustrate the passion and misdirection of Israel's desires, and how does it relate to the concept of the "gyroscope of the love of God"?
4. Compare the way the people of Israel put their trust in the political leadership of their kings and the way they pursue alliances with foreign nations. How does this tendency undermine their relationship with God, and what alternative solution is offered?
5. Examine the relationship between the nation's failure to turn to God ("shub") and the consequences described in Hosea 7, and discuss the implications for understanding the purpose of God's judgment.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Jeroboam II:** A king of Israel who reigned for 42 years, prior to the tumultuous period discussed in the passage.
- **Shub:** A Hebrew word meaning "to turn around," used to describe the act of repentance and returning to God.
- **Ephraim:** A term often used to refer to the northern kingdom of Israel, also known as Samaria.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement between God and his people, defining the terms of their relationship.
- **Gyroscope:** An analogy used to describe the stabilizing influence of the love of God that can keep a person from being thrown around by the world.
- **Samaria:** The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, and the metonym for the nation.
- **Nihilism:** The belief that life is meaningless and without inherent value.
- **Co-regency:** A period when two or more rulers reign simultaneously, sometimes due to political instability or the illness of a current ruler.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or anything other than God, often involving misdirected passion and misplaced trust.
- **Foreign Alliances:** Political or military agreements made with other nations, especially Egypt or Assyria, that represent a lack of trust in God.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 6, Hosea 7, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Understanding Hosea 7

1. **What was the political situation in Israel during the time Hosea was prophesying, and how did it impact the nation?** The political landscape of Israel during Hosea's time was extremely unstable, marked by a rapid succession of kings and numerous co-regencies following the long reign of Jeroboam II. There were multiple assassinations, dual kingships, and shifting alliances, including one with Egypt followed quickly by one with Assyria. This political instability reflected and contributed to a deeper spiritual and moral decline within the nation. God stated that they made kings that He never chose, indicating a rejection of divine guidance. This chaos was further exacerbated by the fact that factions in the government seemed to be forcing sons onto the throne as foreign policy constantly shifted, demonstrating a nation adrift without consistent leadership or direction.
2. **How did the people of Israel behave as though they believed God didn't know or care about their actions, according to Hosea 7?** The people of Israel acted as if God was unaware of their wrongdoing, believing that there were no consequences for their sins. This was evidenced by their deceit, thievery, and banditry, which they carried out without any sense of divine accountability. They acted as if there was no ultimate punishment. They adopted a kind of practical atheism, living as if God were not present, did not care, or was unable to take action. This attitude led to a society steeped in sin, where moral boundaries were consistently transgressed. Their lack of concern for God's knowledge and presence indicates a severe spiritual blindness.
3. **What does it mean that God "remembers" their sins, as opposed to just "knowing" them?** God's "remembering" their sins signifies a deeper, more personal engagement with their actions than merely "knowing" about them. It implies that God takes their sins to heart, reflecting a personal involvement from the past to the present. "Knowing" suggests a factual awareness, while "remembering" embodies an emotional and intentional acknowledgment of their wrongdoing, highlighting the significance of their actions in relation to their covenant with God. This deeper level of remembrance demonstrates God's thorough and engaged response to their sin, moving beyond mere knowledge into a place of deep consideration of their actions.

4. **How does Hosea 7 depict the leadership of Israel, and what was their relationship to the people's sinfulness?** The leadership of Israel, particularly the kings, is depicted as being deeply involved in the nation's wickedness. They were not only participating in sin but also delighting in the wickedness of their people, which allowed them to manipulate and control the populace. The leaders were consumed by their passions and drunkenness. Their own sinfulness led them to neglect their covenant duties. Their lack of moral compass contributed significantly to the overall corruption of the nation. Because they were not adhering to the covenant, the people were unable to judge or hold them accountable. This was a direct result of the religious leaders' failure to teach the covenant, leading to widespread moral decay.
5. **What is the significance of the imagery of heat and ovens in Hosea 7?** The imagery of heat, fire, and ovens in Hosea 7 symbolizes the intense and misdirected passion of the Israelites. Their fervor was not for God but for idols and political intrigues, leading to destructive behaviors. They are described as being "hot enough to kill people," suggesting a volatile and dangerous energy fueled by their desires. This fiery passion, lacking the guidance of God's love, results in a state of chaos and violence. The imagery emphasizes how their passion, when not properly directed by faith in God, becomes a force of destruction, both for themselves and for their leaders.
6. **Why were the people turning to foreign alliances, and what was the result?** The people of Israel turned to foreign alliances, primarily with Egypt, because they had lost trust in their own kings and had ceased to rely on God for protection and guidance. They believed that these alliances would bring them strength and security. However, these foreign alliances ultimately sapped their strength and led to their downfall. The text likens the nation to a "flat loaf not turned over," symbolizing a nation that is half-baked and in decline, unaware of their growing weakness. This is depicted in their "gray hair" - a sign of their decay that they fail to acknowledge or heed. Rather than turning back to God, they sought out temporary solutions that ultimately hastened their destruction.

7. **What are the key reasons why the people of Israel were not turning back to God?** The people of Israel were not turning back to God for several interconnected reasons. Firstly, it was not a “live option” for them. They had become complacent in their sin and had lost all sense of the right direction. They did not recognize the severity of their situation nor did they seek His help. They also did not genuinely repent from their hearts. Instead of calling on God they instead, according to the text, “wail on their beds”. Further, they had a misguided belief that God didn’t care or wasn’t there to help them. Their narrative was false and their hearts were hardened, they had lost their moorings and their anchors when they left Egypt. This resulted in a rejection of God, preventing them from experiencing redemption.
8. **What is the message of God's judgment in Hosea 7, and what is the hope for the people of Israel?** God's judgment, as portrayed in Hosea 7, is not an act of arbitrary anger but a necessary consequence of their rebellion. They are warned that because they are defying their Creator, they will suffer for it. The judgment is intended to bring them back to their senses and lead to repentance. God expresses a longing to redeem them, even though they speak falsely about Him. Though the people of Israel are facing significant consequences because of their sin, the hope lies in the possibility of repentance and a return to God. God's intention is not ultimately to punish them, but to bring them back to His ways. The exile, although a terrible consequence they attempt to avoid, is the very thing that can bring them back to God, much like a shoot emerging from a burned-out stump.