

## Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 7, Hosea 8

### Resources from NotebookLM

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

#### 1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 7, Hosea 8, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This transcription of a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt **analyzes** Hosea chapter 8, focusing on **Israel's sins** and their **broken covenant with God**. Oswalt **explains** that the covenant wasn't merely a set of laws, but a **relationship** with God, revealed through His character, the character He desires for His people, and humanity's inherent flaws. He **connects** Israel's idolatry, political instability, and disregard for God's law to their failure to live out this covenant relationship. Finally, he **emphasizes** the importance of a life lived in accordance with God's will, rather than solely adhering to religious rituals.

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 7 – 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 7, Hosea 8

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 8:

#### Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea 8

##### I. Context and Introduction

- **Political Chaos:** Dr. Oswalt emphasizes that Hosea's prophecies are set against a backdrop of political chaos in Israel, spanning from the end of Jeroboam II's reign (around 755 BC) to the reign of Hezekiah (around the 720s-710s BC).
- **List of Sins:** Hosea 8 (and continuing through 9) presents a list of Israel's sins, which are the cause of their impending disaster.
- **Metaphor of the Eagle:** The chapter opens with a warning: "Put the trumpet to your lips, an eagle is over the house of the Lord." (Hosea 8:1) Oswalt explains that eagles, in biblical terms, are associated with vultures, signaling impending doom.
- **Broken Covenant:** The core issue is that Israel has broken their covenant with God and rebelled against His law. They declare, "O God, we know you," but their actions reveal otherwise.

**II. The Nature of the Covenant** Dr. Oswalt dedicates a significant portion of his lecture to explaining the meaning and significance of the covenant between God and Israel. He stresses three essential aspects:

- **Revealing God's Character:** The covenant's first purpose is to demonstrate God's character. The people say "we know you" but their actions prove they do not. As Oswalt states, "No, you don't. Your behavior shows you don't know me at all..."
- **Revealing God's Desired Character for Humanity:** The second purpose is to show the character God wants for His people: "Here's my character, and I want you to share it." This is not about strict rules, but about a relationship based on divine love and holiness. Oswalt clarifies that holiness "is not" a caricature of being prudish, but an alignment with God's character.
- **Revealing the Problem of Human Sin:** The covenant also reveals humanity's inherent problem. They were not insincere when they agreed at Sinai, yet quickly fell into idolatry, highlighting an inherent flaw, "God, something is wrong with us... Something's wrong with our hearts. Something's wrong with our spirits."

- **Covenant is NOT the way to God, but the walk with God:** Oswalt makes a clear distinction, stating "The covenant is not the way to God, but the walk with God." He stresses that God saved Israel from Egypt out of love and grace. He did not save them because they kept the covenant. The covenant is about walking with their Savior, not about earning God's favor.

### III. Covenant vs. Ancient Law Codes and Covenants

- **Law Codes and Kings:** Oswalt points out that ancient law codes typically originated from kings who demanded obedience. The king would say, "in my kingdom, this is the way you're going to behave. And if you don't, you're going to regret it."
- **Covenants between Kings and Subjects** Often these covenants would include "if you serve me, I will protect you." However, the relationship was based on coercion, not love.
- **Unique Hebrew Covenant:** The Hebrew Bible sets the law within a covenant context rooted in grace and divine love. God's acts of deliverance precede the law. The commandments are not a way to earn salvation, but a response to God's saving grace, which he has already given to Israel. Oswalt notes, "It puts the law code in a covenant setting. Why do we do these things? Because of who he is and what he has done."

### IV. The Ten Commandments as a Covenant Foundation

- **Two Tablets:** Oswalt describes the Ten Commandments as being on two tablets - the first four focusing on the relationship with God, the last six on relationships with other people.
- **Monotheism:** The first tablet emphasizes monotheism ("no other gods"), which is not a natural evolution of religion but a revelation from God. "God is not this world, and this world is not God."
- **Sanctifying God's Name:** The second commandment highlights the importance of not taking God's name in vain, and living in a way that reflects the sanctity of His name.
- **Sabbath as a Gift:** The Sabbath is a gift, highlighting God's provision. "All your time is His, and you show it by what you do with one's sacrifice."

- **Honor and Origin:** The second tablet emphasizes the gift of life from parents (and ultimately from God). He stresses cherishing life, sexuality, possessions and reputations.
- **Beyond External Observance:** Oswalt explains that God is concerned with internal thoughts and motives, not just external actions. He points to the Sermon on the Mount to demonstrate that simply not committing murder isn't enough, one must also not harbor hatred for a brother.
- **Covetousness as Idolatry:** Oswalt highlights that covetousness ("if I just had what you had I'd be happy") is a form of idolatry, as it indicates that happiness is found in possessions instead of God. This section is punctuated by a story about a dying man having his children get rid of his possessions and trophies.
- **The Focus on Others:** The last six commandments highlight God's concern for our relationships with others and "What does this tell us about the character of God? Selfless? Wants you faithful? He loves us. He is a God who cares about people."

**V. Specific Sins of Israel (Hosea 8)** Oswalt identifies specific sins that flow from Israel's broken covenant:

- **Setting Up Kings Without Consent:** Israel creates leaders without God's guidance. The people seek leaders for security, but these leaders repeatedly fail, and are often assassinated. This highlights a desire to control their destiny apart from God, "Because they would not serve the king, they had to make kings of their own. Who would take care of them?"
- **Idolatry:** They create calf idols as a form of "Yahweh" worship, treating them like entertainment or cultural icons. Oswalt calls this idolatry, comparing it to modern examples like the worship of sports figures and entertainers.
- **Trusting Other Nations:** Instead of trusting God, they seek alliances with foreign powers. He uses the image of a "wild donkey" in heat running to Assyria, or of a prostitute selling herself to her lovers.
- **Ritualistic Religion Without Transformation:** They still perform rituals to Yahweh, creating "sinful altars" that are for show, not for genuine transformation. He calls these "churches for sinning" which provide a false sense of religious satisfaction without genuine change, or a "culturally oriented church."

- **Forgetting Their Maker:** They build palaces and focus on material wealth, forgetting the God who delivered them. This emphasis on material possessions highlights their misplaced trust in earthly comforts.
- **Conscience Shaped by the World:** The final point emphasizes how the conscience is shaped by the culture, not by God. This highlights that simply following a set of rules, or following what feels right, isn't sufficient for knowing God.

## VI. Conclusion

- **Covenant as a Walk:** Oswalt reiterates that the covenant is not a means to God, but a walk with God, emphasizing the dynamic, ongoing nature of the relationship.
- **Call to Introspection:** The lecture concludes with a call to introspection, urging his audience to examine their lives in light of God's covenant and to pursue a life that reflects His character. He asks, "will we be people of the covenant?"

## VII. Key Quotes:

- "They have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law, Israel cries out to me, O God, we know you. But Israel has rejected what is good."
- "The covenant is not the way to God. It is the walk with God."
- "Why do we do these things? Because of who he is and what he has done."
- "It's a conflict between Sennacherib and Yahweh."
- "A place to make a show of religion...a culturally oriented church."

**VIII. Implications for the Modern Audience** Oswalt subtly draws parallels to contemporary society, encouraging listeners to question their own loyalties and priorities. He uses examples of obsession with entertainment, wealth, and political solutions to demonstrate the ways in which modern culture mirrors ancient Israel's departure from God.

**IX. Overall Message** The lecture stresses that true faith is not about outward rituals or political maneuvering, but about a deep, transforming relationship with God that affects all aspects of life.

## 4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 7, Hosea 8

### Hosea Chapter 8 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. According to Hosea, what is the primary reason disaster is facing Israel?
2. What are the three purposes of the covenant, as described in the lecture?
3. How does Oswalt differentiate between the covenant as "the way to God" versus "the walk with God"?
4. How did the ancient law codes and covenants differ from the covenant God made with Israel?
5. What is the significance of the "law of the roaring ox" in the context of the lecture?
6. According to Oswalt, what does it mean to "make God's name empty?"
7. How does Oswalt describe the connection between the two tablets of the Ten Commandments?
8. What are the first three sins of Israel that Hosea lists in Chapter 8, verses 4-10?
9. What is the problem with "altars for sinning," according to Oswalt?
10. What does the story about Bill Pierce and his father illustrate about possessions?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Disaster is facing Israel because they have broken the covenant and rebelled against God's law. They claim to know God, but their actions demonstrate they have rejected what is good and do not truly know Him.
2. The three purposes of the covenant are: to reveal the character of God, to reveal the character He desires for His people, and to reveal humanity's inherent problem. These purposes show the nature of God, our ideal nature, and our need for God.
3. Oswalt states that the covenant is not the *way* to God; it is the *walk* with God, meaning that the covenant is not a means to an end, but rather a lifelong journey

of living in relationship with God, informed by His character and laws, after He has graciously saved us.

4. Ancient law codes were created by kings to coerce their subjects into obedience through the threat of punishment. In contrast, the Hebrew Bible places its law code within a covenant setting, where the laws are to be kept out of gratitude and love to God for his grace, not to earn His grace.
5. The "law of the roaring ox" illustrates the principle that knowledge is responsibility; one is held accountable for the consequences of their actions if they have knowledge and fail to take precautions. God uses this principle in the covenant relationship to show the responsibility of the people.
6. To "make God's name empty" is to use His name casually, for magical purposes, or in ways that don't reflect His true character, thereby profaning His reputation and demonstrating a lack of care for who He is.
7. The first tablet of the Ten Commandments focuses on our relationship with God, while the second tablet is focused on our relationships with other people. They show a balanced, interconnected view of how to live within God's covenant.
8. The first three sins of Israel listed by Hosea are: setting up kings without God's consent, making calf idols of Yahweh, and trusting in other nations instead of trusting in God. These betrayals of the covenant show a lack of faith in God's provision and authority.
9. "Altars for sinning" are places where people practice religion for the sake of appearing religious, not because they seek genuine change, or where they attend to feel good about themselves, without any transformative effect on their actual lives.
10. The story about Bill Pierce and his father illustrates that possessions do not bring happiness or value. It shows that even prized possessions, like his father's golf trophies, ultimately hold little significance compared to the lasting impact of living according to the covenant and serving God.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the covenant in Hosea 8, focusing on how it reveals both God's character and the expectations He has for His people. How does the concept of the covenant shape the understanding of sin and redemption in this chapter?
2. Analyze Hosea's critique of Israel's political and religious practices in Chapter 8. How do their actions reveal a deeper problem in their relationship with God, and what are the consequences of their infidelity?
3. Explore the tension between ritual and true worship in Hosea 8. How does Oswalt define true worship, and why is it crucial for believers to examine the motivations behind their religious practices?
4. In what ways does Oswalt's interpretation of Hosea 8 challenge common assumptions about religion and faith, particularly regarding the nature of grace and the purpose of religious observance?
5. Consider the relevance of Hosea's message in Chapter 8 for contemporary society. How can its insights inform our understanding of idolatry, political allegiance, and the role of the church in the world today?



## Glossary of Key Terms

**Covenant:** A solemn agreement or contract between two parties, particularly between God and His people. In this context, it is God's commitment to His chosen people.

**Monotheism:** The belief in and worship of only one God. It contrasts with polytheism, the belief in many gods.

**Transcendence:** The idea that God exists outside of and is independent of the material world, distinct from it, not limited by creation.

**Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods, placing created things or human desires in the place of God.

**Original Sin:** The concept that humanity has an inherent inclination towards sin due to a fallen nature. In this context, it refers to the human propensity to turn away from God.

**Dispensationalism:** A theological system that divides history into different periods or "dispensations," each marked by a specific way God interacts with humanity.

**Historical Prologue:** The part of a covenant that tells something about what has happened in time and space.

**Stipulations:** The conditions or requirements of a covenant that outline how the parties are expected to behave.

**Altars for Sinning:** Places where religion is practiced for show, without genuine transformation of the heart or life.

**Chutzpah:** Yiddish word for extreme self-confidence or audacity, sometimes with a sense of arrogance.

## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 7, Hosea 8, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions About Hosea 8

1. **What is the primary reason for the impending disaster facing Israel, according to Hosea 8:1-3?** The primary reason for the impending disaster is that the people of Israel have broken their covenant with God and rebelled against His law. Despite claiming to know God, their actions demonstrate a rejection of what is good.
2. **What are the three main purposes of the covenant with God as described in the source?** The three main purposes of the covenant are: first, to reveal the character of God; second, to reveal the character that He desires for His people; and third, to reveal humanity's fundamental problem—that there is something wrong with our hearts and spirits, which can't be solved by social or political means.
3. **How is the covenant described in terms of its relationship to God, and why is this distinction important?** The covenant is described not as "the way to God," but as "the walk with God." This distinction is crucial because it emphasizes that the covenant is not merely a set of rules or a means to achieve salvation, but a relationship with God. It is about how one lives in response to God's saving grace. God first saved them and then gave them laws to structure their lives in relationship to him.
4. **How did the ancient world's approach to law codes and covenants differ from the covenant God made with Israel?** Ancient law codes and covenants were typically based on coercion, where a king demanded obedience in exchange for protection. In contrast, God's covenant with Israel was based on His prior act of deliverance from slavery. The laws that God gave were in response to who He is and what He had already done, not simply a list of things to do to be made right. The focus is on love, grace, and a relationship with God, which makes keeping these laws an expression of one's relationship with God.

5. **What are the main sins of Israel that are listed in Hosea 8, and how are they connected to breaking the covenant?** The main sins of Israel in Hosea 8 are: 1) setting up kings without God's consent, indicating a lack of trust in God's provision; 2) making calf idols, demonstrating a preference for tangible idols over the true God; 3) trusting other nations instead of God for security, showing a lack of faith in God's protection; and 4) engaging in rituals at "sinful altars," which implies their worship had become a mere show of religion, without genuine transformation or a real relationship with God. All of these sins are connected to breaking the covenant by substituting their own methods of security, leadership, and worship instead of God.
6. **How is idolatry described in a modern context, according to the source?** Idolatry is described in a modern context as giving excessive importance or worship to things like entertainers, sports figures, or possessions. It's not limited to traditional idols, but can be anything that takes the place of God in one's life. The speaker illustrates this with how people often spend money and time on these things over God.
7. **What is the significance of the shift from the first tablet of the Ten Commandments to the second tablet, as presented in the source?** The first tablet of the Ten Commandments concerns the relationship between people and God. The second tablet shifts the focus to the relationship between people and other people. This is because, as the speaker says, the character of God is selfless, faithful, and loving, and all of these things are reflected in how we treat other people. If one doesn't treat others well, it's an indication of a problem with the first tablet because people are a gift from God, and how we treat them is a reflection of how we understand God.
8. **How does the source characterize the nature of "conscience," and why is this a significant point?** The source characterizes "conscience" as something that can be shaped and is not inherently a reliable guide. This is a significant point because it implies that a "good" conscience alone is not sufficient. The focus should be on having a relationship with God, and being people shaped by His character.