

Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 9, Hosea 10

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 9, Hosea 10, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. John Oswalt's lecture analyzes Hosea 10, connecting Israel's downfall to their idolatry and rejection of God's authority. **Oswalt draws parallels** between ancient Israel's political divisions and modern societal issues, highlighting the dangers of prioritizing control and earthly power over faith. He emphasizes the consequences of rejecting God's order and the importance of repentance and acknowledging God's sovereignty. **The lecture further explores** the significance of religious symbolism, warning against substituting material things or rituals for genuine faith. **Finally, Oswalt connects** Hosea's prophecies to later historical events, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the ultimate judgment, urging listeners to embrace God's grace.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 9 – 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 9, Hosea 10

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Oswalt_Hosea_EN_Session09.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea 10

Executive Summary:

This session focuses on Hosea chapter 10, examining the political turmoil and spiritual decline of Israel in its final years before the Assyrian conquest. Dr. Oswalt connects the historical context with contemporary issues of idolatry, control, and the importance of repentance. He emphasizes the dangers of misplaced trust in idols and foreign alliances and underscores the need to focus on God as the source of all blessings. The session also highlights the cyclical nature of rebellion against God and its consequences, drawing parallels between ancient Israel, New Testament events, and modern-day society.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Political Instability in Israel:

- The lecture opens by reviewing the political instability in Israel following the reign of Jeroboam II. A rapid succession of kings, often achieved through violence and assassination, marked this period. "Jeroboam died in 752, and his son succeeded him. He only lasted about six months before he was killed by an army officer, probably."
- Two political factions emerged: a pro-Assyrian party advocating for peace through tribute and an anti-Assyrian, pro-Egyptian party desiring resistance. "During all this time, you've clearly got two parties. You've got the pro-Assyrian party... On the other hand, is the anti-Assyrian party."
- This political instability and internal division set the stage for Israel's downfall.

1. The Assyrian Threat and the Fall of Israel:

- The rise of Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria marked the end of a period of Assyrian quiescence and initiated a time of aggression and domination. "Everything changed in 745. That's when Tiglath-Pileser III came to the throne of Assyria, and the period of Assyrian quietness was all over."

- Israel's attempts to resist Assyria (through alliances with Egypt) ultimately failed. Hosea, the last king of Israel, rebelled against Assyria, leading to the siege and capture of Samaria. "Tiglath-Pileser finally died in 727, and it's apparent that Hosea immediately rebelled, expecting help from the Egyptians. Didn't get any."
- The devastation of Beth Arbel (referenced in Hosea 10:14) serves as a stark illustration of the brutal consequences of Israel's rebellion. "...the roar of battle will rise against your people, so that all your fortresses will be devastated, as Shalman...devastated Beth Arbel on the day of battle, when mothers were dashed to the ground with their children."

1. **Spiritual Decline and Idolatry:**

- Despite their prosperity, the Israelites turned to idolatry, using God's gifts to worship pagan gods and "adorned his sacred stones." "As his fruit increased, he built more altars. As his land prospered, he adorned his sacred stones."
- This idolatry is tied to a desire for control: people felt they could manipulate and control idols, unlike the transcendent and uncontrollable God. "I feel like I can control this idol. I feel like I can give him presence or withhold presence... This is what is so frightening about biblical religion. You can't make God do anything."
- Dr. Oswalt connects this to a modern challenge: the tendency to view personal wealth as earned and controlled rather than as a gift from God. He points out that a small percentage of people tithe, questioning this mindset and urging a fundamental change. "The question is not how much of my money God demands. The question is how much of God's money he lets me use?"

1. **Misplaced Trust and Shame:**

- The Israelites' trust in idols and foreign alliances led to shame when those idols and alliances proved powerless against Assyria. "Ephraim will be disgraced. Israel will be ashamed of its foreign alliances."
- Oswalt explains that the biblical concept of shame isn't embarrassment; it's the disgrace experienced when something you declared trustworthy fails you. "It is; I am disgraced because I mouthed off about something really being trustworthy, and it has failed me."
- In contrast, the Bible insists that God will never put those who trust in Him to shame, though we may sometimes mistakenly believe we are trusting God. "God

will never put you to shame...Now, there may well be times when we say we're trusting God and we really aren't."

1. **The Dangers of a Cynical and Adversarial Attitude towards Leaders:**

- The Israelites adopted a cynical and adversarial attitude towards their leaders, which is dangerous, as it can lead to undermining authority in general. "So, what attitude are they taking toward their political leaders? Adversarial? Cynical? They don't trust them."
- While acknowledging that some leaders are not honorable, he encourages Christians to pray for them, remembering that authority is ultimately established by God. "Remember, Paul, authority has been put in place by God. ...And what happens to me when I begin to undercut that authority structure in my heart? I become the authority."
- He notes that, especially in a democracy, Christians should be actively involved in the political process.

1. **The Cycle of Rebellion and Judgment:**

- Oswalt connects the Israelites' plight with repeated patterns of rebellion against God throughout history, including the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the end-times judgment described in Revelation. "So, in a real way, you've got these three eras: the destruction of Israel, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world."
- He emphasizes the importance of repentance when God corrects us, in contrast to hiding from God's judgment, drawing a connection from Hosea to Jesus' words before the crucifixion and the book of Revelation. "Am I in the habit of repenting when the Lord corrects me? When the Lord points out, attempts to control him, attempts to use him, attempts to make him in my image?"
- The professor also connects the events in Hosea back to the moral failure at Gibeah as the root of Israel's sin. "Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned...and there you have remained."

1. **The Importance of 'Sowing Rightness':**

- Hosea 10:12 calls the people to "Sow rightness for yourself; reap the fruit of hesed." He explains hesed as undeserved love and mercy. This "sowing rightness" creates the conditions under which God can pour out his grace. "Act right, live right, do right, and God will be able to pour his undeserved grace upon you."

- Conversely, he warns that sowing wickedness leads to disaster and death. "On the other hand, you sow wrong. ...And you will reap... bad." The example is given that the person who jumps off a building suffers the consequences not due to an arbitrary judgment of God but due to defying God's natural laws of how the world works.

Key Quotes:

- "Nothing changes, does it?" (Commenting on the cycle of violence and instability).
- "The question is not how much of my money God demands. The question is how much of God's money he lets me use?" (Challenging the concept of ownership).
- "I feel like I can control this idol. I feel like I can give him presence or withhold presence." (Explaining the motivation behind idolatry).
- "It is; I am disgraced because I mouthed off about something really being trustworthy, and it has failed me." (Clarifying the concept of biblical shame).
- "Authority has been put in place by God...And what happens to me when I begin to undercut that authority structure in my heart? I become the authority." (Connecting authority with the concept of human control).
- "They will say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us." (Connecting the fall of Israel, Jerusalem, and the end times).
- "Sow rightness for yourself; reap the fruit of hesed." (Explaining the need to act according to God's law to receive His grace).

Concluding Points:

Dr. Oswalt uses the historical account of Hosea 10 to urge his audience to examine their own lives, their reliance on idols, and their attitudes toward God and authority. He encourages repentance, a shift in perspective on the source of all blessings, and a life grounded in gratitude and faith. The session serves as a powerful reminder that choosing to live in accordance with God's design for the world results in blessings, whereas rebellion against that design inevitably leads to destructive consequences.

4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 9, Hosea 10

Hosea Chapter 10 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What significant political change occurred in 745 BCE, and how did it impact Israel and Judah?
2. Describe the two opposing political factions that emerged in Israel during the reign of the various kings after Jeroboam II.
3. According to the text, what happened at Beth Arbel, and what historical event does it foreshadow?
4. How does Hosea describe the prosperity of Israel, and how did they respond to it?
5. What does Dr. Oswalt say is the fundamental question about money that needs to change in our thinking?
6. Explain the concept of *hesed* and how it relates to sowing righteousness, according to Hosea.
7. Why were the people of Israel ashamed, and what does the concept of "shame" signify in this context?
8. How does Hosea describe the calf idol of Beth Avan, and what does Dr. Oswalt think of religious symbols?
9. What does the cry to the mountains and hills to "cover us" represent, and in what other biblical texts is this idea found?
10. What specific historical event does Hosea reference when he states, "Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned"?

Quiz Answer Key

1. In 745 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser III came to power in Assyria, ending a period of Assyrian quietness. This led to increased aggression and tribute demands from Assyria, creating significant problems for both Israel and Judah.

2. The two factions in Israel were the pro-Assyrian party, which favored peace and paying tribute to Assyria, and the anti-Assyrian party, which sought alliances with Egypt and advocated fighting against Assyria.
3. At Beth Arbel, Shalmaneser devastated the area, dashing mothers and children to the ground. This event foreshadows future destruction and connects to Jesus' lament over Jerusalem and to the end-time judgment in Revelation.
4. Hosea describes Israel's prosperity as a time when they built more altars and adorned their sacred stones, but this prosperity was used to worship idols rather than the Lord. Their hearts were deceitful and motivated by the need for control.
5. The fundamental question is not how much of one's money God demands, but how much of God's money he allows one to use. This shift in perspective recognizes God as the ultimate owner of everything, not people.
6. *Hesed* is God's undeserved love and grace. According to Hosea, sowing righteousness (right behavior and attitudes) does not earn this love, but it establishes the conditions in which God can freely pour it out.
7. The people were ashamed because they had trusted in something that failed them - specifically the calf idol of Beth Avan and their foreign alliances. Shame in this context signifies a disgrace caused by the failure of what one trusted in.
8. The calf idol of Beth Avan was likely a large, imposing bull, not a small calf. Oswalt argues that religious symbols, like church buildings, can become idols that people worship instead of God himself.
9. The cry to the mountains and hills to "cover us" represents a desperate attempt to hide from impending judgment. This idea is also found in Luke's account of Jesus' journey to the cross and in the book of Revelation describing the end times.
10. Hosea references the events in Judges 17-21, when the tribe of Benjamin committed a heinous crime and were nearly wiped out. He draws a parallel to the current state of Israel, indicating that the same type of judgement will happen again.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the political landscape of Israel during the time of Hosea, explaining the major shifts in power and the internal conflicts that contributed to the nation's downfall.
2. Discuss the concept of idolatry as presented in Hosea chapter 10, exploring not only the literal worship of idols but also the underlying attitudes and motivations behind idolatrous behavior.
3. Examine Dr. Oswalt's assertions about the nature of authority and our responsibilities towards those in power, particularly within the context of Christian faith.
4. Compare and contrast the themes of repentance, judgment, and divine grace as they appear in Hosea chapter 10, using specific examples from the text to support your claims.
5. Evaluate the relevance of Hosea's message for contemporary audiences, focusing on how the text challenges modern assumptions about faith, prosperity, and control.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Tiglath-Pileser III:** The Assyrian king who came to power in 745 BCE and initiated a period of Assyrian aggression.
- **Jeroboam II:** King of Israel during a time of relative peace and prosperity.
- **Beth Arbel:** A strategically important location on the Sea of Galilee where Shalmaneser devastated the area, an act that foreshadows further judgment.
- **Hesed:** Hebrew word meaning "steadfast love" or "covenant loyalty," often used to describe God's unconditional and gracious love.
- **Beth Avan:** A mocking term for Bethel, the location of one of the golden calf idols.
- **Mishpat:** Hebrew word meaning justice or order; in this context, God's order for the world.
- **Shalmaneser:** Assyrian king who played a role in the capture of Samaria and the downfall of Israel.
- **Sargon:** Assyrian king who succeeded Shalmaneser and claimed to have finished off the defeat and exile of Samaria.
- **Gibeah:** A city associated with a grave sin in Judges 19, used by Hosea as a parallel to Israel's current state.
- **Fallow Ground:** Uncultivated land that needs to be broken up before planting; metaphorically, one's heart that needs to be prepared for receiving God's grace.

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5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 9, Hosea 10, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Hosea and the Downfall of Israel

1. **What were the political circumstances in Israel during the time of Hosea's prophecy, and how did this contribute to their downfall?**
2. During Hosea's time, Israel was politically unstable, marked by rapid changes in leadership and internal divisions. After a prosperous period under Jeroboam II, the nation faced a series of assassinations and power struggles. Two main political factions emerged: a pro-Assyrian party, advocating for submission and tribute to avoid conflict, and an anti-Assyrian party that sought alliances with Egypt to resist Assyrian dominance. This division, coupled with the rise of Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria, destabilized the nation and led to its eventual conquest. The people's lack of faith in God, exemplified by their reliance on foreign powers for security rather than God, contributed to their downfall.
3. **How did Israel's prosperity contribute to their idolatry, according to Hosea?**
4. As Israel prospered, they attributed their success to idols rather than to God. The more they benefited materially, the more altars they built and the more they adorned sacred stones for pagan gods. This was driven by a desire for control; people felt they could manipulate idols and make them fulfill their desires, something they could not do with God. They forgot that God had given them the land and everything in it, and they used God's gifts to worship pagan idols, illustrating a fundamental problem: a misplaced sense of ownership and a lack of gratitude to God. This attitude also led to the practice of not tithing, as they viewed their wealth as their own rather than a gift from God.

5. **What does the prophet Hosea mean by calling the idol of Bethel a "calf," and why is it significant?**
6. Hosea calls the idol of Bethel a "calf" as a form of mockery, emphasizing its inferiority and lack of power compared to the true God. The idol was likely not a small calf but an imposing bull, which served to mock the people for their misplaced worship. Calling it a calf highlights the absurdity of placing faith in a man-made object rather than the living God. It emphasizes the false hope the people had in these idols. The people's distress and mourning over its loss to Assyria also highlights that they placed their trust in the idol's perceived power rather than in the power of God.
7. **Why does the prophet emphasize that the people are ashamed of their foreign alliances?**
8. The people's shame stems from the fact that they trusted in foreign alliances, such as those with Assyria and Egypt, which ultimately failed them. The shame isn't merely embarrassment; it's the disgrace of having placed their confidence in something unreliable that was supposed to protect them. These alliances were not only political arrangements, but they also involved an implicit acceptance of foreign gods, further alienating Israel from the true God, and ultimately leading to their vulnerability and conquest. It highlights the folly of relying on earthly powers instead of God, and that God will never put anyone to shame, whereas the things of this world will inevitably fail you.
9. **What is the significance of the people's desire to hide under mountains and rocks? How does this relate to the New Testament?**
10. The people's cry to the mountains and rocks to "fall on us" expresses a desire to escape divine judgment and the consequences of their actions. This theme echoes through the Bible, appearing at the time of Israel's destruction, again during the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and finally in the book of Revelation at the end of the world. It signifies a fear of God's wrath and a lack of willingness to repent. In Revelation, this desire is displayed by all who hide from the wrath of the Lamb, connecting the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem to the ultimate judgment in the end times. These passages demonstrate that God's judgment is a constant throughout history, and that the choice to repent and turn to God is more important than finding a way to avoid divine justice.

11. How did the sin of Gibeah relate to the behavior of the people during Hosea's time?

12. The sin of Gibeah refers to a horrific event described in the Book of Judges, where violence and moral depravity led to a tribal conflict within Israel. Hosea uses this historical example to show that the people of his time were repeating the same sins. It emphasizes that their current state of moral decay was not a new development, but rather a continuation of past transgressions, indicating a persistent pattern of disobedience and moral decline. Hosea is saying that just as the people of Gibeah faced devastating consequences for their sin, so too would the people of Israel.

13. What does Hosea mean when he says "Sow righteousness for yourselves; reap the fruit of hesed"?

Hosea's message is a call to action, meaning to live in accordance with God's will and commandments, which is "sowing righteousness." When they do, they will reap "hesed," which is often translated to "steadfast love," but here, it's understood as undeserved grace and love of God. It emphasizes the connection between right behavior, attitudes, and practices and the ability for God to bestow his grace and love. It's not a transactional relationship where you earn God's love through good behavior, but rather a state of being that enables God to bless and show mercy to his people. Conversely, those who sow wickedness and godlessness will reap disaster, a concept that is echoed throughout scripture, and that means there are consequences for their actions.

1. How does Hosea connect Israel's downfall with the concept of control and the rejection of God's authority?

2. The prophet argues that Israel's actions were driven by a desire for control. They sought to control their idols, their political alliances, and ultimately, their own destinies. Their rejection of God's authority is reflected in their cynical attitude toward political leaders, their worship of idols, and their reliance on foreign powers for security. By trying to manage their own world, they removed themselves from God's protection and guidance, and ultimately fell into ruin. They were not willing to place their faith in God or to repent from their sins. He warns the people that trying to control everything themselves ultimately leads to meaninglessness and destruction.