

Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 11, Hosea 12

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 11, Hosea 12, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea chapter 12 examines prevalent misconceptions about God, **specifically addressing lies** such as God's inability to punish, absence, untrustworthiness, and irrelevance. The lecture **uses the story of Jacob** to illustrate how people repeatedly stray from God despite experiencing his blessings, highlighting the need for repentance and a renewed focus on faithfulness, love, justice, and trust in God. Oswalt concludes by reflecting on the **contemporary church's failures** in preparing young people for the challenges of Christian life, emphasizing a life of perseverance rather than fleeting excitement.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 11 – 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).**



**Oswalt_Hosea_Sess
ion 11.mp3**

3. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 11, Hosea 12

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Oswalt_Hosea_EN_Session11.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea Chapter 12

Overview:

Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea 12 delves into the core themes of Israel's unfaithfulness, God's unwavering love and justice, and the enduring human tendency to misunderstand and misrepresent God. He explores these themes through a close reading of Hosea 12, drawing connections to the life of Jacob and the broader history of Israel. The lecture also includes a modern application concerning contemporary challenges in the church.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Recurring Unfaithfulness of Israel (and by extension, humanity):

- Oswalt notes that Hosea often repeats the same themes in different ways, and chapter 12 is no exception. The core issue is Israel's (and humanity's) tendency towards deceit and unfaithfulness to God. He starts with Hosea 11:12, noting that the verse belongs to the beginning of chapter 12 in the Hebrew text: "Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, Israel with deceit, Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful holy one." (Hosea 11:12)
- He states that the lies told about God then are similar to those told today: "He won't punish...He's not present... He can't be trusted... He's one among many... He is not necessary," "and if I don't have a present sense of his necessity, then who cares? I serve him to get, and he is not producing. Therefore, why serve him? With so much evil in the world, obviously, he can't be good."
- This unfaithfulness is demonstrated through political alliances with Assyria and Egypt, which ultimately failed to provide security or lasting peace, instead of reliance on God.
- He posits that such deceit is not just limited to Ephraim as these lies are "perennial".

1. God's True Nature and Attributes:

- Oswalt contrasts the lies about God with the truth: He *can* and *will* punish; He *is* present ("Emmanuel, God with us"); He *can* be trusted; He *is* the one and only God, not just one among many; He is not indifferent; He is very necessary.
- Oswalt emphasizes that God is not distant or unconcerned but actively involved in the world and the lives of individuals. "He is terribly relevant. The issue is our perception. He is in control. He is not indifferent. He does care. He is very necessary."
- He emphasizes that one cannot "prove" God through scientific methods of weighing and measuring because God is a spirit. He says this is a modern fallacy that the ancient Sumerians never had, who believed in a spiritual reality.

1. The Story of Jacob as an Analogy:

- The lecture uses Jacob's life story as a model of human fallibility and God's grace. Jacob, whose life begins with deception, is the recipient of God's promises. Oswalt notes the contrast between the human nature of Jacob and the promises from God. He states, "God has no pride," regarding the renewal of promises at Bethel.
- Even after his encounter with God at Peniel and the name change to Israel, Jacob continues to fall back into old patterns of self-reliance and deceit. "Your name now will be Israel. Guess what? He is called Jacob in the next four chapters. Never once, Israel."
- Oswalt uses Jacob's move to Shechem as an example of how God's people often gravitate towards appealing secular cultures. "We don't want to be different from them; we want to be like them. We want to look like them. We want to think like them. We want to live like them."
- Oswalt also discusses Jacob's attempts to manipulate his brother Esau and the tragic events in Shechem that highlight the consequences of Jacob's choices.
- Jacob's story demonstrates that sanctification is not an instant event but a process of realizing and living out God's grace. He states that "sometimes, our sanctification has to be realized...in a hard choice about Canaan," which is the choice to go back to Bethel.

1. **The Call to Return to God (Shuv):**

- The lecture identifies the call to return to God in verse 6: "You must return to your God." (Hosea 12:6).
- Oswalt emphasizes this is both a physical and spiritual turning.
- The lecture highlights five key words illustrating what it means to be a child of God: "Turn back," (shuv) "carefully keep" (shamar) love and justice (Hesed and Mishpat) "and always wait for your God" (qava).
- He unpacks "Hesed", which is self-giving love, and Mishpat, which is God's divine order where the vulnerable are given special care. He also states that "wait" (qava) is synonymous with trust.

1. **Canaanite Influences and Dishonest Scales:**

- Oswalt points out the wordplay between "merchant" and "Canaan" to highlight the dangers of becoming like the Canaanites in their corrupt practices. "And so again, there's almost certainly a wordplay going on here. That you, Jacob, have become a Canaanite."
- The imagery of dishonest scales is used as a metaphor for violating God's order and seeking to manipulate reality for personal gain. "God says, in this world that I have made, 16 ounces always equals one pound... And your task is to live in keeping with that order."
- He connects this theme to the idea of wealth becoming an idol where people believe they can "buy off the judge," as Israel believes with their wealth in the passage, stating, "I can buy off the judge with all my wealth. They will not find in me any iniquity or sin."

1. **God's Actions Are Redemptive, Not Punitive.**

- Oswalt states in verse 9 that God will "make you live in tents again." He connects this to the Feast of Tabernacles.
- He emphasizes that God's actions, even those that seem like punishment (such as the exile), are ultimately redemptive and aimed at drawing Israel back into a right relationship with Him. He goes on to explain how God will lure Israel into the wilderness in order to speak tenderly with them.
- Oswalt sees God trying to help Israel remember that everything they have is a gift from God, not their own accomplishments.

- This is demonstrated in Hosea 2:14, where God says, "I will allure her. I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her."
- **Modern Application:** Oswalt draws parallels between ancient Israel and modern society, noting a similar tendency to value wealth and power over God and His will. He states, "We value wealth and power more than God and his will. There's no question."
- He expresses concern over the number of people leaving the church since 2000 and suggests the church failed to prepare young people for the reality of the Christian life as a challenging, long-term commitment, rather than a fun and exciting experience. "We have not prepared them for the fact that the Christian life is by and large not fun and exciting. The Christian life is a long walk in the same direction."
- He ends with the emphasis that we do not serve God to get, but because of love and who He is. He states, "No, we serve him for love. Because he is the master of the universe and gives us his universe in which to live, prosper, and love, and we serve him."

Key Quotes:

- "Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, Israel with deceit, Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful holy one." (Hosea 11:12)
- "We don't want to be different from them; we want to be like them. We want to look like them. We want to think like them. We want to live like them."
- "Turn back to God. Be very, very careful to do hesed...and always wait for your God."
- "God says, in this world that I have made, 16 ounces always equals one pound... And your task is to live in keeping with that order."
- "I will allure her. I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her."
- "We value wealth and power more than God and his will. There's no question."
- "The Christian life is a long walk in the same direction."
- "No, we serve him for love. Because he is the master of the universe and gives us his universe in which to live, prosper, and love, and we serve him."

Conclusion:

Dr. Oswalt's lecture on Hosea 12 provides a rich theological analysis of the human condition, our relationship with God, and the importance of turning from self-reliance and deceit to a life characterized by love, justice, and trust in God. The lecture serves as a challenge to both the ancient people of Israel and modern believers to recognize God's grace, His sovereignty, and His redemptive love. It also contains insight into the challenges and trends in contemporary Christian faith.

4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 11, Hosea 12

Hosea Chapter 12 Study Guide

Quiz

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

1. According to the lecture, what are some common lies people tell themselves about God?
2. How does the lecture describe God's nature concerning punishment and presence?
3. What does Jacob's encounter at Bethel reveal about God's character and Jacob's initial response?
4. Why does Jacob's name not change to Israel permanently after Peniel, and how does this connect to the idea of sanctification?
5. What is the significance of Jacob settling in Shechem, and how does it relate to the allure of Canaanite culture?
6. What five key concepts are presented in Hosea 12:6 as a total picture of what it means to be a child of God, and what do they each signify?
7. How is the image of dishonest scales used in the lecture, and what does it represent about defying God's order (mishpat)?
8. How does the lecture connect the story of the man who built bigger barns in Luke 12 to the themes in Hosea 12?
9. What is the overall impression given by the list of events from Israel's history in Hosea 12 and what does this suggest about their understanding of God?
10. What is the purpose of God making them live in tents again, and how does it relate to the idea of exile and their relationship with God?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Some common lies people tell themselves about God include that He won't or can't punish, that He is not present, that He cannot be trusted, that He is one among many, that He is not necessary, or that He cannot be proven. These lies often lead people to reject or ignore God's presence and influence in their lives.

2. The lecture emphasizes that God can punish and will, and that He is present. He is not distant or indifferent, and His presence is good news for those who are with Him but bad news for those who try to ignore Him.
3. Jacob's encounter at Bethel reveals God's gracious and merciful nature, as God renews his promises despite Jacob's deceptive past. Jacob's initial response shows a transactional mindset, offering God a portion of his wealth if God keeps his promises.
4. Jacob's name not changing permanently to Israel after Peniel indicates that his transformation is a process, not an immediate state, and highlights that God did not change his nature. Jacob's choice to settle in Shechem shows his continued struggle with sin, rather than sanctification.
5. Jacob settling in Shechem demonstrates his attraction to Canaanite culture, despite his spiritual experience at Peniel. This highlights the perpetual temptation to assimilate into worldly values, which has relevance for all believers.
6. The five concepts in Hosea 12:6 are: "return" (shuv, both physical and spiritual turning), "carefully keep" (shamar, careful obedience), "steadfast love" (hesed, self-denying love), "justice" (mishpat, God's divine order), and "wait" (qava, trusting in God's timing). They collectively represent the essential aspects of a life devoted to God.
7. The image of dishonest scales symbolizes a defiance of God's created order (mishpat), where people manipulate standards for their own gain. It demonstrates a desire to control reality and get ahead dishonestly, rather than adhering to God's principles of justice and fairness.
8. The parable of the rich man who built bigger barns shows how earthly abundance can lead to misplaced priorities, similar to how Ephraim believes his wealth shields him from sin. It stresses that soul health is not found in wealth but in a right relationship with God.
9. The list of events from Israel's history creates an impression of their passivity and dependency on God, as they are always on the receiving end of God's actions. It suggests they failed to recognize that their blessings were a gift from God, not a result of their own merit.
10. God makes them live in tents again to get their attention and remind them of their dependency on Him, as He did in the desert. This is meant to reorient them

towards their true identity as beneficiaries of God's grace, and not of their own works.

Essay Questions

1. Explore the recurring theme of deception throughout the lecture, particularly in the lives of both Jacob and the nation of Israel. How do these instances of deception illustrate the nature of sin and its consequences?
2. Discuss the lecture's emphasis on the concept of "mishpat" (God's divine order), and how its misinterpretation leads to injustice and the distortion of God's intent in both ancient Israel and modern society.
3. How does the lecture connect the concept of the "wilderness" to spiritual growth and renewal? Explore the symbolism of the wilderness in the Old Testament and how it is used to describe the exile.
4. Analyze the lecture's critique of modern approaches to church ministry, particularly the focus on entertainment and excitement. How does this relate to the broader themes of spiritual formation and the need for a sustained commitment to faith?
5. Examine the connection between the concept of 'hesed' (steadfast love) and the New Testament concept of 'agape,' and discuss their significance in understanding God's character and how believers are called to live.

Glossary of Key Terms

Bethel: A significant location where Jacob had a divine encounter and received God's promises. It is later corrupted into a place of idolatry.

Canaan: Refers to the promised land of Canaan and also to the Canaanite culture, which represents worldly allurements and a system of dishonest business practices.

Ephraim: Represents the Northern Kingdom of Israel, often criticized for its unfaithfulness and reliance on worldly alliances.

Gilgal: A significant location that served as Israel's home base after victories in conquering the land, which eventually becomes a place of sin.

Hesed: A Hebrew term referring to steadfast, self-giving, and undeserved love, often used to describe God's love for his people. It is also the standard that God asks his people to live by and for each other.

Israel: Originally Jacob's new name after wrestling with God, which he rarely is called in the chapters following. This name is meant to signify a transformed identity, which is also applied to the nation of Israel.

Jacob: A biblical patriarch known for his deceitful nature and subsequent transformation, who serves as a representative of Israel's own history of sin and redemption.

Mishpat: A Hebrew term that refers to God's divine order for life and the principle of justice. It goes beyond fairness to include special care for those who cannot contribute.

Peniel: The place where Jacob wrestled with God and received a blessing and a new name. It marks a pivotal point in Jacob's spiritual journey.

Qava: A Hebrew term meaning "to wait," which is synonymous with trusting and anticipating God's intervention.

Sanctification: The process of becoming more like God, and for Wesleyans specifically, the process that starts when someone accepts Jesus as their Savior.

Shamar: A Hebrew verb meaning "to guard" or "carefully keep," signifying careful obedience to God's commands.

Shechem: A Canaanite city where Jacob settles despite God's guidance, symbolizing the allure of worldly culture.

Shuv: A Hebrew verb meaning "to turn" or "return," denoting both physical and spiritual repentance. It signals a turning away from sin and towards God.

Tabernacles/Tents: Temporary dwellings that remind the Israelites of their time in the desert and their dependence on God's provision. They represent a state of humility and dependence, especially during the feast of Tabernacles.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 11, Hosea 12, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Themes from Hosea 12 (Oswalt)

1. **What are some common lies people tell themselves about God, and how does Hosea challenge these lies?** Hosea identifies several perennial lies that people tell themselves about God, including that He won't punish, isn't present or active in the world, can't be trusted, is one among many deities, isn't necessary, isn't good given the presence of evil, and can't be proven by material means. Hosea counters these with the truth that God *can* and *will* punish, *is* present (Emmanuel, "God with us"), *can* be trusted, *is* the one and only God, *is* absolutely necessary, *is* good, *is* in control, and *is* not indifferent to His creation. He is also not limited by material proof, but revealed through spiritual truth.
2. **How does the story of Jacob illustrate the nature of God's grace and human tendencies?** Jacob's life is a powerful example of both human deception and God's persistent grace. Jacob's life begins with trickery, but even when he tries to bargain with God (at Bethel) after experiencing God's presence, God doesn't reject him. Instead, God continues to keep his promises despite Jacob's failings. Jacob's struggles with Laban and his wrestling with God are examples of God's unwavering blessing despite human imperfections and dishonesty. Ultimately, Jacob realizes that it is God's blessing that he needs and not earthly recognition or power.
3. **What is the significance of Jacob's name being changed to Israel, and why is he still often called Jacob afterward?** God changes Jacob's name to Israel at Peniel, signifying a change of character and relationship with God, a transition from a deceiver to a person who has struggled with and found God. However, the fact that he is still called Jacob in subsequent chapters reveals a tension between the ideal of his transformed identity and the ongoing reality of his human failings. The name change may signify a change in his *potential*, not a complete change in his immediate day to day actions, and his ongoing failures remind readers that sanctification is a process that requires ongoing choices to walk according to God's character.

4. **What does it mean to "return to your God" as described in Hosea 12:6, and what three things are involved?** Returning to God (shuv) involves both a physical and spiritual turning around, a deliberate turning away from sin and self-dependence. This turning is to be followed by a careful guarding (shamar) of God's ways. This isn't just about outward obedience, but careful and diligent application of the commandments. The text mentions steadfast love (hesed) and divine justice (mishpat) as key areas of life where guarding obedience is necessary. Finally, the passage emphasizes waiting for God (qava), which is described as a trustful and patient expectation of God's faithfulness and redemption.
5. **How does the metaphor of "dishonest scales" in Hosea 12:7 connect to God's order (Mishpat) for the world?** Dishonest scales represent a defiance of God's created order and are a symbol of crookedness, particularly in financial dealings. God has designed the world with certain consistent characteristics, such as fixed measures and weights. Using dishonest scales is an attempt to manipulate reality for personal gain, an attempt to cheat God's established order. It's a denial of God's Mishpat, or divine order for life. Ultimately, dishonest scales reflect a worldview where people think they can bend reality in their favor, rather than acknowledging God's immutable order for reality.
6. **How does the story of the rich man in Luke 12 relate to the themes of Hosea 12 and the importance of soul health?** The parable of the rich man who hoards his harvest but dies the same night highlights the danger of misplaced priorities. Like Ephraim's boasting of his wealth, the rich man believes his soul's well-being lies in material abundance. This is a denial of God's authority over material abundance, and the true sources of life. This parable ties in with the questions raised in Hosea about what people believe they should value to take care of their soul. Just as one must exercise their body for health, it is imperative that one also care for their spiritual health and not rely solely on material things.

7. **How does Hosea connect Israel's past experiences (the Exodus, the prophets, the conquest of Canaan) to their current state?** Hosea reminds Israel of the ways God provided for them: the Exodus from Egypt, the guidance through prophets, and the land of Canaan. They were also given families and provision. Despite this, they have turned away from God and toward corrupt practices. The recurring use of passive verbs ("they were brought out," "they were spoken to") highlights their lack of initiative in their relationship with God, suggesting they have taken God's blessings as entitlements rather than gifts that foster a deeper relationship. They have become complacent and forgotten that their identity is derived from God and his provision, not from their own accomplishments.
8. **Why does God want to make Israel live in tents again, and what does it have to do with the wilderness and the idea of exile?** God threatens to make Israel live in tents again as a way to lead them back to Him. This imagery is linked to the Feast of Tabernacles, which commemorates the time when God provided for them in the wilderness. The idea is that the exile in the wilderness serves to strip away the illusion of their own self-sufficiency and reveal their absolute dependence on God for everything. By forcing them into a place of vulnerability, God wants to draw them back into a relationship where they recognize Him as their provider and savior, and where they are motivated by love and a true relationship, not personal gain.