

Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 13, Hosea 14

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 13, Hosea 14, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea 14 explores the themes of **repentance and restoration**. He examines repeated calls for Israel to return to God, highlighting the obstacles—**arrogance and a "spirit of prostitution"**—that **hinder their return**. Oswalt connects this to the concept of "iniquity," a deliberate turning away from God. The lecture then focuses on the **importance of confession and trust in God**, contrasting biblical wisdom based on God's nature with worldly wisdom based solely on observation. Finally, it emphasizes God's **unconditional love and compassion**, particularly for the marginalized, and the resulting **blessing that comes from trusting in Him**.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 13 – 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 13, Hosea 14

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Oswalt_Hosea_EN_Session13.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea 14

Overview: This document summarizes Dr. John Oswalt's teaching on Hosea 14, the concluding chapter of the book. Oswalt focuses on the themes of repentance, restoration, God's character, and the nature of true wisdom. He highlights the recurring call for Israel to return to God and the implications for individuals today.

Key Themes & Ideas:

1. The Call to Return:

- Hosea 14 echoes Hosea 3, portraying Israel as a slave whom God seeks to buy back, not to mock or harm.
- The theme of "return" is central and has appeared throughout the book, using the Hebrew word meaning "to turn around." Oswalt highlights specific instances of this call in Hosea 3:5, 5:4, 6:1, 7:10, and 12:6.
- **Quote:** "Throughout the book, we've had those calls to return... It is the Hebrew word that is simply to turn around."
- These calls are accompanied by promises of healing and restoration, yet hindered by arrogance, a "spirit of prostitution," and a preference for the "tainted" over the pure.
- Oswalt notes that there can be a point where someone is so far gone they can no longer hear God's message of love, drawing a parallel to the concept of "sin that leads to death" in 1 John and Hebrews. He uses the analogy of a broken receiver, unable to pick up the signal of God's love.

1. The Nature of Iniquity:

- Oswalt defines the Hebrew word translated as "iniquity" in Hosea 14:1 as a specific, intentional deviation from God's plan. It is a deliberate crossing of a known boundary, more than a simple "missing the mark" which is another word for sin.

- **Quote:** "This one describes fully intentional. I know where the fence is, and I'm going over it. Nobody shuts me in."
- He emphasizes that this "iniquity" has an objective reality that cannot be ignored, like a "something" that comes between two people in a marriage and must be addressed.
- **Quote:** "Something has been altered in the nature of existence. Something has come into existence now. And all of us who are married understand this. There's something between us, and it has to be dealt with."

1. The Power of Words & Confession:

- Repentance involves taking "words" to God, which means agreeing with God that He was right and we were wrong. This involves genuine, humble confession.
- **Quote:** "If we're going to turn back, we've got to say to him, you were right, and I was wrong."
- Oswalt notes the Hebrew word for "word," *dabar*, also means "thing" and "event," highlighting the lasting impact of words, that they have the power to create reality.
- Genuine confession is necessary to deal with the reality of iniquity.
- **Quote:** "Real words. Not cheap words, but a genuine confession. I was wrong. I did what I should not have done. And I'm sorry."
- The confession includes a plea for forgiveness and grace, "Receive us graciously," and also the fruit of the lips as a sacrifice.
- **Quote:** "I don't deserve for you to receive me. I don't deserve for you to take me back. But please take me back as an expression of your grace."

1. Trusting in God, Not Idols:

- True repentance involves turning away from trusting in human means (like Assyria) and the works of one's own hands (like idols), toward trusting in God alone.
- **Quote:** "We're going to trust not Assyria but you. We're going to trust not the work of our hands but you."
- Oswalt argues that today, people often trust in their accomplishments (bank accounts, large houses, etc.) as their idols.

- God isn't against work or accomplishment, but the focus of trust should be on Him.
- **Quote:** "There's a very, very big difference between saying to him, I am trusting you to accomplish through my hands what you want to accomplish in my life."

1. **God's Compassionate Character:**

- God's character is highlighted through his care for the fatherless, the outcasts. The fact that "in you the fatherless find compassion" leads to Israel's new trust in God and rejection of their previous idols and alliances.
- **Quote:** "in you, the fatherless find compassion, and the effect is, we're not going to trust Assyria and the works of our hands anymore."
- Oswalt emphasizes that God doesn't value people for their contributions but for who they are. God is for the non-contributors: widows, orphans, and immigrants.
- He connects the fatherless to those children born from prostitutes and says that fatherlessness is a predictor of delinquency. He notes that it is a major epidemic, with 50% of babies in the US being fatherless in 2022.
- **Quote:** "Every study, every study there is, shows that the one predictor of delinquency is fatherlessness. It's not economics, it's not race, it's not any of the things you might think of. It is fatherlessness."

1. **God's Healing & Love:**

- God's response to repentance is not just forgiveness but healing of their "waywardness," addressing the root cause of their sin.
- **Quote:** "He's going to heal them, not what they did. And heal them in what sense? He's going to deal with the cause."
- He emphasizes the difference between saying 'I forgive what they did' and 'I will heal their waywardness.'
- He will love them freely, and His anger will turn away. He uses the word "ahav" for affection.
- **Quote:** "I'm going to love them freely, for my anger has turned away. The word love there is the word for affection. It's not hesed. It's ahav. So, it's, you're my friends."

1. **Restoration & Fruitfulness:**

- God's presence will be like "dew" to Israel, the source of life and growth and fruitfulness and blessing.
- **Quote:** "It's not just, well, everything's going to be fine now. It's I. I will be this precious influence in your life."
- This becomes a model for the Christian life: God is the source, we are the field, and others are blessed by our fruitfulness.

1. **Rejection of Idols:**

- The dialogue "What have I to do with idols" signifies the complete rejection of idols after repentance. God is stating he is done talking about idols. The relationship with God makes idols superfluous.
- **Quote:** "If you're going to be in a relationship with me... you don't need idols."
- Oswalt also explores a textual variant that could be translated as "O Ephraim, what to him is idols anymore?" which reinforces the idea that idols have become irrelevant.
- Trusting in God enables trustworthiness in one's own life.

1. **True Wisdom vs. Worldly Wisdom:**

- Oswalt contrasts worldly wisdom, which is based on human observation and pragmatism, with biblical wisdom, which is rooted in God's character and the nature of His creation.
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. He defines this "fear" as recognizing that there is a God and that he is not you.
- Biblical wisdom is about following God's ways because they are right, not just because they work.
- **Quote:** "It works because it's right. And it doesn't work because it's wicked. It's right to be humble. It's wrong to be arrogant."
- The ways of the Lord are trustworthy, based on self-giving love, and restoration if we turn back.

- God's desire is to bless and that true blessing is a state of mind and heart. He gives the example of poor Christians he met who were happy because of their relationship with God.

1. God's Ways and the Results:

- The ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them, reiterating Hosea 14:1.
- God is trustworthy. He is a God of self-giving love. He allows us to face the consequences of our bad choices. He will restore us if we turn back.
- God desires godly behavior and rewards it disproportionately.

Conclusion:

Dr. Oswalt's teaching on Hosea 14 is a powerful call to repentance, restoration, and a life of trust in God. The chapter's main focus is a genuine turning back to God, embracing His grace and allowing Him to be the source of our life. True wisdom is found in aligning with God's character and ways, not just worldly pragmatism. The consequences of sin are real, but God's love and grace are greater, able to heal our "waywardness" and restore us to a life of fruitfulness and blessing.

4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 13, Hosea 14

Hosea Study Guide: Session 13

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Oswalt, what does the word "return" (in Hosea) signify in Hebrew?
2. What are the three main themes that Oswalt identifies from the recurring calls to "return" in Hosea?
3. What does Oswalt say is the difference between the common word for sin, and the word translated as "iniquity" in Hosea?
4. How does Oswalt interpret the phrase "take words with you" in Hosea 14:2?
5. What are the two possible interpretations of the "fruit of our lips" that Oswalt presents?
6. What does Oswalt say is the significance of the phrase "in you the fatherless find compassion"?
7. How does Oswalt explain God's healing in Hosea 14:4?
8. What is the significance of the metaphor of dew in Hosea 14:5?
9. Why does Oswalt believe God is done talking about idols by the end of the book?
10. How does Oswalt differentiate between biblical wisdom and other ancient forms of wisdom?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Hebrew word for "return" simply means to turn around, signifying a change in direction. It's not just about going back but turning away from a wrong path.
2. Oswalt identifies three themes: the calls to return, the promise of healing and restoration if they return, and the things that prevent them from returning.
3. The common word for "sin" can be unintentional, but "iniquity" specifically describes an intentional transgression or deviation from God's plan, knowing the boundaries and choosing to cross them.

4. Oswalt interprets "take words with you" as the necessity of genuine confession where a person agrees with God's perspective, acknowledging their wrong and expressing sincere repentance.
5. The "fruit of our lips" could be a renewal of vows to God, representing spoken promises or a person's sincere and honest words that bring about positive results in life.
6. The phrase "in you, the fatherless find compassion" highlights God's character as caring for the outcast and non-contributors, contrasting with the values of the world. It emphasizes God's gracious nature which draws people to trust Him.
7. Oswalt says that God heals their waywardness, meaning God addresses the root cause of their sin rather than simply forgiving the actions, dealing with the internal issues that led them astray.
8. The dew metaphor represents God as the precious, essential source of life, sustenance, and blessing for the people. It signifies his life-giving influence that keeps the plants thriving through dry periods.
9. Oswalt suggests God is done talking about idols because they have recognized the problem, come off the slave block, and have been wooed back into the desert, thus demonstrating a shift in focus and trust.
10. Oswalt differentiates biblical wisdom as something rooted in the character of God, revealing his moral law and right ways, while ancient wisdom focuses on pragmatism and human observation.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer the following questions in essay format, drawing from the provided source material.

1. Explore the various calls to "return" in Hosea, according to Oswalt. What are the barriers that prevent Israel from returning, and how does Hosea 14 address these?
2. Analyze the significance of language in Hosea 14, particularly the concepts of "iniquity" and "words." How does Oswalt connect these ideas to repentance and restoration?
3. Discuss the theme of trust as it is presented in Hosea 14, according to Oswalt. How does the decision to trust in God relate to the rejection of idols and the works of one's own hands?
4. Examine the idea of God's character as it is revealed in Hosea 14, according to Oswalt. How does God's compassion for the fatherless relate to his healing of their waywardness?
5. According to Oswalt, how does the concept of biblical wisdom differ from ancient world wisdom, and what are the implications for understanding the book of Hosea?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word often translated as "loving-kindness," "covenant faithfulness," or "steadfast love." It refers to God's loyal, unwavering love for his people, especially in a covenant relationship.
- **Mishpat:** A Hebrew word often translated as "justice," "judgment," or "right." It refers to the way God rules, his standard of fairness, and what is right in his eyes.
- **Iniquity:** An intentional deviation from God's standards, where one deliberately transgresses his laws and knowingly does what is wrong.
- **Dabar:** A Hebrew word that can mean "word," "thing," or "event," emphasizing how spoken words become realities or actions with consequences.
- **Ahav:** A Hebrew word meaning affection, or love as a feeling of fondness, often associated with personal connection and intimacy.
- **Waywardness:** Refers to the tendency to deviate from a correct path, particularly in a moral or spiritual sense, often associated with sin or rebellion.
- **Idolatry:** The act of worshiping or valuing something other than God, such as material possessions or personal achievements. In Hosea it is the act of trusting things over trusting God.
- **Text Criticism:** A scholarly discipline aimed at examining the original text of scriptures, including identifying differences across various manuscripts. It seeks to understand how those differences came to be.
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, completed in the centuries before the time of Christ.
- **Parim:** A Hebrew word meaning "bulls," used in an older translation of Hosea 14:2 but changed to "fruit of our lips" based on text criticism.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 13, Hosea 14, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Hosea's Message of Return and Restoration

- **What is the central theme of the Book of Hosea, particularly chapter 14, and how is it presented?**
- The central theme is a call for Israel to return to the Lord. This is depicted in Chapter 14 as God offering a chance to buy back His people who are on the "slave block." The return is not met with mockery or punishment but with an invitation to reconciliation and restoration. This echoes earlier calls throughout the book.
- **What recurring motifs related to "return" are found throughout Hosea and what do they signify?**
- The book repeatedly features calls to "return" (Hebrew: *shub*) to God, which means to turn around. These calls highlight God's desire for His people to change their direction and come back to Him. The recurring motif of return is often accompanied by the promise of healing and restoration. Simultaneously, there are elements preventing them from turning back, such as their deeds, arrogance, and a desire for what is tainted rather than pure.
- **What does the book of Hosea suggest are the primary obstacles preventing Israel's return to God?**
- Several factors hinder Israel's return, including their own deeds, arrogance, and a "spirit of prostitution"—a desire for what is impure. They are described as missing the target of God's will, demonstrating both unintentional and intentional rebellion. This intentional deviation, specifically described as "iniquity," highlights an objective reality and a breaking of covenant that cannot be ignored.
- **According to Hosea, how can the people of Israel begin to reconcile with God?**
- Reconciliation begins with acknowledging wrongdoing and confessing to God. This involves using real, heartfelt words to express sorrow and agree that God was right and they were wrong. It's not just about words; it requires a genuine confession and humility. They are to ask for forgiveness, to be received graciously, and to offer the fruit of their lips as a sacrifice of praise, potentially renewing their vows to Him.

- **What is the significance of the phrase "fruit of our lips" in Hosea 14?**
- The "fruit of our lips" is presented as a sacrifice and is closely related to vows made to God. It also ties to the idea that sincere, honest words spoken can produce good results in life. This phrase suggests a commitment that goes beyond mere lip service, requiring actions that align with the spoken words.
- **What does Hosea suggest is the relationship between trust in God and idolatry?**
- Hosea emphasizes that true repentance involves abandoning reliance on anything other than God. This includes ceasing to trust in political alliances, such as with Assyria, or in one's own accomplishments (the work of one's hands), and idols. The focus must shift to trusting in God's character, particularly His compassion for the marginalized and the vulnerable, like the fatherless. Trusting God allows one to be a trustworthy person, freeing them from manipulation and greed.
- **How does Hosea portray God's response to those who return, and what does it mean to "heal waywardness"?**
- God's response is one of healing and unconditional love. He will heal "their waywardness," which means addressing the root cause of their rebellious spirit, rather than just forgiving the act itself. This healing leads to an affection and intimacy characterized by the turning away of anger, and restoring a relationship where there is no longer any cause for separation. He will be like dew, providing life and vitality.
- **What does Hosea's final message teach about wisdom and the ways of the Lord?**
- Hosea's final message is that true wisdom comes from understanding and following the Lord's ways, which are not merely practical or utilitarian but are rooted in His character and righteousness. God is trustworthy and self-giving love. The wise live by a relationship with God, trusting Him instead of trusting in their own power and plans. The righteous find their path by understanding God's character and way, while the rebellious stumble by following their own ways instead of aligning themselves to God's plan for their lives. The rebellious do not live in the blessed state and instead, stumble in life.