

A Study of the Minor Prophets  
Week 5 – Hosea  
Chapters 11-14

1. Although the Hosea book is characterized by the metaphor that follows the story of Hosea's marriage, Hosea 11:1–7 introduces a new metaphor, portraying God as the Father of a rebellious son. The central point of the metaphor is clear: while God loved Israel as a father loves his son, the child was ungrateful, rebelling against the father who cared for him. This father/son relationship began with the historical exodus out of Egypt, but due to rebellion, will culminate in exile.
2. In Chapter 11:8-11 the extended judgment speeches that began with Hosea 6:4 now reach a conclusion as the panel shifts from judgment to salvation, a precursor to the final oracle of salvation that concludes the book (14:1–8).
3. Although Israel will experience judgment, she will also experience future restoration. As surely as God is God (v. 9), he will call his people from captivity, reestablishing them in their homes. The God who in wrath is described as a roaring lion tearing apart his prey (5:14–15; 13:7–8) is now described as a lioness “roaring” to call her cubs home (11:10). Israel, who was once described as a senseless dove is now described as a dove flying home from foreign lands to again dwell in the land of God's possession (11:11).
4. But in a manner typical of Hosea, reflections on future blessing are abruptly shifted by the reminder of present sin. Returning to the language of indictment, Hosea describes Ephraim as encircling God with lies (11:12a; allusion back to “no truth” in 4:1), and feeding on the wind (12:1 an allusion back to reaping “the whirlwind” in 8:7).
5. As in earlier judgment speeches, Hosea continues to be characterized by historical reflection and metaphor. Historical reflections include Jacob's struggle with Esau (12:3). In his struggle with God Jacob was a precursor to a struggle that would continue to Hosea's day, and as God spoke to Jacob at Bethel (12:4), so God was continuing to call his people to repentance.
6. 14:1–3 “Israel, return to Yahweh your God”. In a final call to repentance, as a precursor to the envisioned salvation of “Orphan Israel” (14:3 net), Hosea puts the very words of repentance into the mouth of God's wayward nation. In so doing, Yahweh ensures that he—not Assyria, not horses, nor idols—he himself will save.
7. Hosea ends with a wisdom postscript exhorting his readers toward understanding. Hosea this postscript to direct his readers toward the “knowledge of the Lord,” the very thing that was missing in the spiritual and political leadership of Israel. In his conclusion, Hosea effectively captures the heart of Hebrew wisdom found in Proverbs 1:7, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline.”