

But God

Hosea 12-13

Read Hosea 12:1-6.

The Northern Territory of Israel grew increasingly distant from God and was in desperate need of a father's discipline. They committed harlotry with other gods and made deals with other nations for their security, foolishly entering into agreements with Egypt and Assyria, versus trusting in the Holy One who is always faithful. God described their actions as "feeding on the wind."

Feeds – feed, graze: figurative of idolater

East Wind – wind of the east, often as violent and scorching

1. **THINK:** What do you think God meant when He said, "Ephraim feeds on the wind and pursues the east wind"? (Consider Proverbs 15:14 and Jeremiah 10:5 when answering.)

2. **THINK HARDER:** In what ways do you think people feed on the wind today? What do you think is at the root of their appetite?

3. What are you hungry for and feeding on today?

Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

- Jeremiah 15:16

In Hosea 12:2, God says that He will bring a charge against Judah as well. While they had not backslidden to the extent of Israel, they were flirting with idolatry. God warns that if they do not repent, He will discipline both Israel and Judah, whom He refers to

collectively as “Jacob,” because Jacob was the father of twelve sons whose descendants became the twelve tribes that make up the nation of Israel.

In verses 3-5, God used the life of Jacob (the man) as an example of God’s loving discipline and man’s struggle with sin.

Jacob – heel holder, heel catcher, or supplanter; one who wrongfully or illegally seizes or holds the place of another, one who achieves their goals through crafty and dishonest means, to go behind one’s back to deceive

4. Jacob embodied the true meaning of his name. Read the following verses and briefly describe the life of Jacob while observing the loving discipline of God in His life.

Genesis 25:26 _____

Genesis 25:29-34 _____

Genesis 27:5-10 _____

Genesis 27:42-43 _____

Genesis 28:10-15 _____

In Haran, Jacob, the con artist, became the victim of his uncle’s own con when he was deceived into marrying both of his uncle’s daughters. (Genesis 29)

Genesis 31:1-3 _____

Genesis 32:6-8 _____

Still plagued by fear and anxiety, Jacob prayed and asked God to save him, but his actions proved he had little faith in God's ability to deliver.

Genesis 32:24-29 _____

The outcome of this wrestling match was a new beginning for Jacob and a genuine submission to God.

5. How does Hosea describe the outcome of Jacob's struggle with God (Angel)? (v. 4)

6. **THINK:** Verse 4 makes it sound as if Jacob won his wrestle with God, but we all know no one could defeat God in a wrestling match. While Jacob walked away with a new limp, in what ways do you think Jacob was indeed a winner?

In the end, Jacob was separated from his family and all his worldly possessions when he came face-to-face with his Creator. His struggle to submit left him crippled, but it was his struggle that brought him to the place where he finally realized that he could not go on without God leading the way.

7. What did Hosea hope Israel and Judah would do with this example from Jacob's life? (v. 6)

8. Have you been wrestling with God? Have you come to the point where you are ready to submit fully to Him? Are you ready to fully surrender and make Him Lord over every area of your life? What idols in your life need to be torn down, so that you can wait on your God continually?

Read Hosea 12:7-14.

9. To whom does God compare Israel in verse 7?

10. What two behaviors made this comparison justified? (v. 7)

Their dishonest business practices lined their pockets with more money. Instead of feeling convicted of taking advantage of people, they became puffed up with pride.

11. **THINK:** How did Israel perceive themselves, and what do you think made them “feel” this way? (v. 8)

12. “But I am the LORD your God, ever since the land of Egypt...” Israel may have looked at their prosperity as proof that they remained in good standing with God, but the truth was that judgment was coming. Record the specifics of that judgment.

v. 9c _____

v. 11 _____

13. This was by no means a hasty decision on God’s part. What had He done to try to avoid the need for judgment? (v. 10)

Tended (samar) – Kept, guarded

Preserved (samar) – Kept, guarded

14. Compare and contrast verses 12 and 13.

Verse 12	Verse 13
Jacob...	By a prophet the LORD...
What is similar?	

What is different?	
Israel (Jacob)... And for a wife...	And by a prophet he (Israel)...
What is similar?	
What is different?	

Jacob (whose new name is Israel) fled his country and spent 14 years in a foreign land in servitude, tending sheep and goats (one of the lowest forms of servitude) for his wife, Rachel. Some four hundred years later, God led Israel (Jacob's descendants) out of a foreign land where they were held in servitude to Pharaoh. They entered into a covenant relationship with the Holy One of Israel. They were tended and kept, and given the Promised Land. Hosea hoped to remind them that God had elevated them from the lowest of positions and that they should respond with humility and devotion, but "Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly."

Ephraim is often used to describe the Northern Kingdom, but here God could be speaking more specifically of the pride and sin attributed to the tribe of Ephraim.

15. Read the following verses and describe why Ephraim may have seen themselves as particularly special among the tribes, and how they provoked God to anger.

Joshua 18:1 (Refer to the map in the front of the book.)

Judges 12:1-3 (Jephthah was the current ruling Judge over Israel.)

2 Samuel 2:4, 8-9 (Note that this was before Israel split into two separate kingdoms after Solomon's reign.)

1 Kings 11:26,29-32

When the kingdom of Israel split, Ephraim was the largest and most powerful of all the tribes in the northern kingdom, which is why it is often used as a synonym for Israel or the northern kingdom.

16. Instead of repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, what happened? (v. 14)

Israel had become like a dishonest Canaanite, failing to trust God and enriching themselves through dishonest means. Now they would be taken out of the land at the hands of the Assyrians.

Read Hosea 13.

17. Record the before and after comparisons of Israel given in this passage.

Before	After
v. 1a,b,c	v. 1d,e
Outcome: v. 2	
Consequence: v. 3	
v. 5-6a	v.6b,c
Outcome: v. 12; 16a,b	
Consequence: 7-8	

Consequence: 15

Consequence: 16c,d,e

It is important to note that the terrible consequences Israel would face were caused by their own choices and decisions. God allowed these natural consequences to unfold as judgment. Infants being dashed into pieces was a direct result of their choices, not something God did to punish them.

18. **THINK:** What do you think makes confessing sin difficult at times? What do you think makes confession easier?

19. **THINK HARDER:** Verse 3 states that the idols they made were made according to their skill. What do you think convinced these people that these idols would be able to do anything for them? What makes us believe our idols can do anything for us?

20. Some scholars believe the phrase “let the men who sacrifice” in verse 2 refers to human sacrifice. These men are called on to “kiss the calves.” In what ways do we (or the world) make costly sacrifices to our idols while kissing them in gratitude?

21. Verse 15 points out that Ephraim was fruitful among the other tribes, but it is clear that they did not use what God had given them for His glory. How can you use your specific God-given blessings to bring glory to Him?

22. What life-or-death truth is found in verse 4?

23. Take a moment to reflect on all the ways Jesus is your Savior and all that He has saved you from.

24. Israel made molded images for themselves, they forgot God, and rebelled against the One true God. The judgment of Israel would be devastating; they would be destroyed (v. 9). **But God.** Record the promises of hope for their future.

v. 9b. _____

v. 10a _____

v. 14a _____

v. 14b _____

God had revealed His love for Israel through years of mercy and long-suffering; now He would reveal His love for Israel through judgment that will eventually lead to repentance. We can be grateful for a God Who loves us enough to discipline us.

A Closer Look at God, Our Help

Hosea 13:9

25. Read and record Hosea 13:9b.

The word *help* in this verse is the Hebrew word *ezer*. It means one who helps or aids. Further study shows that it can also mean *rescue* or *save*. *Ezer* appears throughout the Old Testament to describe the Lord God, and it is often used with other words that further explain the character of God, our help.

26. *Ezer* is mentioned 11 times in the Psalms. Read the following Psalms. What words, alongside *help*, are used to describe God and what He gives us?

Psalm 20:2

Psalm 33:20

Psalm 70:5

Psalm 124:8

God, as our help, is mighty; He is our shield, deliverer, and strength. Therefore, we can rely on God for all of our needs!

27. Read Hebrews 13:6. Are you currently struggling with fear, hurt, or trouble? If so, write down what is troubling you.

28. With the knowledge that God is your help, how can the following verses help you in surrendering your fears, hurts, and troubles?

1 Chronicles 16:11

Psalm 46:1

James 1:2-4

1 Peter 5:7

29. Read Psalm 121 and write down all the reasons why you can trust the Lord to be your help.

Israel had turned its back on God. The consequences were grave. And yet God, in His great love and mercy, said in Hosea 13:9 "...but your help is from Me ..." He goes on to say, "I will be your King ..." God IS our help. What amazing love we have from our Father.

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

- Psalm 91:1

30. Finish your lesson by writing a response to God, your helper.
