

How can I give you up, O Ephraim?**Read Hosea, chapters 8.1 – 11.11****INTRODUCTION**

1. Our first lesson, [‘faithless wife-FAITHFUL HUSBAND’](#) from **chapters 1-3** serves to give us a summary of the whole **Book of Hosea** – it is the ‘short’ story of what will be explained in more detail in the remainder of the Book.
2. The second lesson, [‘When I would heal Israel...’](#) from **chapters 4-7** begins as Yahweh convenes His court of justice against faithless Israel – He will produce witness after witness and pronounce and publish evidence after evidence of their betrayals of His covenant love toward them. **Hosea himself will interject himself into the narrative in chapter 6.1-3 to implore and plead with Israel to “Come, let us return to Yahweh; for He has torn us, that He may heal us; He has struck us down, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him.”** This is a not so oblique promise and pointer to the Gospel of Christ that will come **‘in the latter days’** that have already been announced in **ch 2.16-23 & 3.4-5**. [For New Testament references to these words see **Luke 24.46 & 1 Corinthians 15.4**]
3. Now we come to this rather lengthy section in **ch 8.1 - 11.11**. I have titled this section **‘How can I give you up, O Ephraim?’** because that is the heart-broken cry Yahweh Himself screams out in **ch 11.8-9**. Yahweh can’t give them up for good, forever, because He has made a covenant of faithfulness to Israel ... and He must keep His word. But, He will give them up for that moment in time ... He must – He will send them off into exile into Assyria in just a very few short years from the time Hosea is delivering His warnings. But again remember the promises He has made in **ch 2.16-23 and 3.4-5**. Israel will once again be **‘betrothed’** and married to Yahweh in faithfulness. This lesson section will end in **ch 11.11** with Yahweh promising **“and I will return them to their homes, declares Yahweh.”**
4. Once again, we shall see that the **ONLY** way these promises can be fulfilled and delivered is through Jesus Christ and His Gospel. We’ll see how **ch 11.1 points to Christ and His fulfillment of this historic picture. Matthew quotes this verse in Matthew 2.15**. Where national Israel failed and proved to be a faithless ‘son’ from the get-go, Jesus Christ came as a faithful Son of God and the True Israel. **“For all the promises of God find their ‘Yes’ in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our ‘Amen’ to God for His glory.” / 2 Corinthians 1.20**

I / ch 8.1-14 / YAHWEH CONTINUES TO SOUND THE ALARM FOR THEIR COMING DESTRUCTION & ENUMERATE THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS – ESPECIALLY THEIR IDOLATRIES

1. **vv 1-3** / Once again the trumpet alarm is blown [see also **5.18**] to announce Yahweh’s coming destructions upon them – Yahweh even compares Himself to a devouring **culture**. The reason is **‘because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.’** They pretend and feign their worship of Yahweh: **“To me they cry, ‘My God, we-Israel-know you.’”** But in their hearts and in their conduct, they have **spurned** and rejected Yahweh – the only Good they have. Their enemies shall pursue and destroy them
2. **vv 4-6** / The whole political and religious structure and culture in Israel was established in rebellion against Yahweh [see **1 Kings 12.25-33**] – their kings and especially the golden calves Jeroboam I set up in Bethel and Dan to be their ‘gods.’ Just as they have **‘spurned’** Yahweh [v 3], He will **‘spurn’** them [v 5]. Yahweh will destroy everything they have made in rebellion against Him.
3. **vv 7-10** / **“For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.”** Here’s where that saying comes from. You commit what you may think is a small, benign misdemeanor act – and it grows and

explodes like an atomic blast mushroom. Not only are their spiritual adulteries against Yahweh committed internally in their idolatrous religious practices, but also internationally – in their political alliances with other nations to protect them from yet other nations and kingdoms who are threatening them. They are even going to Assyria for protection ... and Assyria will destroy them and carry them off into exile in only 25-30 years from this time! **Yahweh Himself had covenanted and promised to be their Invincible Protector – but they have spurned Him to ally themselves with His and their enemies!**

4. **vv 11-14** / Yahweh now returns again to His grievances against their idolatrous, adulterous golden calf ‘gods’ [**as in vv 4-6**] ... the very proliferation of their outward religious altars and services have multiplied also their transgressions against Yahweh and their guilt.

II / ch 9.1-17 / YAHWEH CONTINUES TO DESCRIBE THEIR FAITHLESS REJECTIONS OF HIM & HIS PROPHETS – AND THE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES OF HIS REJECTING THEM FROM BEING HIS PEOPLE

1. **vv 1-6** / Much of their worship activities and services offered to their golden calves and to the Baals were in the form of grain, wine, and food offerings. These were not only given to the ‘gods’ and to the priests who served their ‘gods,’ but also consumed in sexual acts and ceremonies as part of their ‘worship’ [v 1]. **See how this played in ch 2.5-9.** For the second time in six verses [**ch 8.13; 9.4**], Yahweh declares that their adulterous worship services **do not please Him** and **He will not accept them.** He is going to turn them over to the Assyrians, and they shall mourn there. [*NOTE: Egypt is often named when Assyria is meant – this is because their former bondage, captivity, slavery, and exile in Egypt {from which Yahweh had already redeemed them} serves as an illustration or motif of their coming exile in Assyria. [see vv 3, 6]*]
2. **vv 7-14** / Yahweh pronounces very specific accusations and charges against Israel to show what disdain they have expressed toward Him and His prophets – whom He has sent to warn them and save them from the coming judgments! **Compare ch 9.7 here with ch 8.12. Take care how you respect God’s Word and those who faithfully preach and teach it to you!**
3. *NOTE: there are also two specific historical allusions Yahweh brings up here to show them how deeply, egregiously, and heinously into sin they have gone. ch 9.9, ‘as in the days of Gibeah’ [see Judges 19]; and ch 9.10, ‘Baal-peor’ [see Numbers 25.1-5]. Similar punishments will come upon them: “Woe to them when I depart from them!” / v 12.*
4. **vv 15-17** / Yahweh pinpoints their centers of adulterous, idolatrous worship and all that went on there [e.g., Gilgal], and reiterates His verdict and sentence of His Holiness and justice: **“there I began to hate them,’ ‘I will love them no more,’ ‘My God will reject them because they have not listened to Him; they shall be as wanderers among the nations’ / vv 15, 17.**

III / ch 10.1-15 / YAHWEH PRONOUNCES HIS JUDGMENTS ON ISRAEL & UPON THEIR CENTERS AND OBJECTS OF THEIR ADULTEROUS WORSHIP – LIKENING THEM TO PAST HISTORIES OF THEIR DEBAUCHERIES

1. **vv 1-8** / This sounds very much like what Yahweh complains about in **chapter 8**: they have set up their kings, their idolatrous ‘calves’ and altars, with all their ceremonies and services ... ALL as acts of rejection of Him as their covenant God and their intentional, insistent rebellion against Him. **Vv 5-6**, Yahweh will have all their ‘gods’ carried off into exile with them ... and the calamities that will befall them in that day will be so dreadful, **“...they shall say to the mountains, ‘Cover us,’ and to the hills, ‘Fall on us.”** You will recognize this plea for suicidal deliverance from their tribulations as it is repeated again in **Revelation 6.16** – to be uttered again by those who are alive and remaining when the **‘wrath of the Lamb’** is unleashed upon the unbelieving world at Christ’s Second Coming.

2. **vv 9-15** / Again, Yahweh reprises His mention of **Gibeah** [see **ch 9.9**] ... to remind and emphasize to Israel that their corruption, adulterous conduct and behavior, and even their perverse moral debaucheries are all just part of their national and cultural DNA. What occurred in **Gibeah** [see **Judges 19**] happened hundreds of years before during the days of the Judges. Israel's 'national pastime' was this same sort of abhorrent debauchery. It had been ingrained and institutionalized into their national culture and identity. Yahweh must discipline them! [v 10].
3. BUT, Yahweh calls upon them to **'break up your fallow ground'** [v 12] of their hard hearts and their history of rebellion and faithlessness against Him. **"Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that He may come and rain righteousness upon you"** / v 12.

IV / ch 11.1-11 / YAHWEH SPEAKS TO ISRAEL FROM THE WRENCHED HEART OF A GRIEVED FATHER WHOSE LOVE & TENDER MERCIES HAVE BEEN BETRAYED

1. This whole chapter is Yahweh's impassioned pleadings with Israel to love Him in return as He has loved them and return to Him ... and spare Him from having to discipline them as He must if they do not return to Him. I can do no better than quote George M. Schwab, Sr. from Expository Commentary [who himself also quotes others...] *"This material 'is as tender as any in the Bible' – its intimacy is almost maternal. 'Hosea 11.1-11 gives as clear and personal [a] picture into the heart of God as any illustration in all of Scripture.' God loved Ephraim, adopted him, taught him to walk, held him in His arms, healed him, bound Himself to him with 'cords of kindness,' bent down to feed him (vv 1-4). One could not ask for a more attentive parent. He really loved His boy."*
2. **vv 1-4 / When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.** What Yahweh is describing here is His own 'covenant reminiscing' of the days when He went down to Egypt to deliver them from their bondage there. Yahweh calls Israel 'my son' because that's what He called them in **Exodus 4.22: "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says Yahweh, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, Let my son go that he may serve me.'"** You really need to go back and read Yahweh's personal testimony to Moses in **Exodus 3.7-10. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey..."** Yahweh did all that!
3. Now, it's almost like Yahweh is flipping through a photo/memory album containing pictures of how He loved and took care of Israel during their 'toddler/preschool' years: teaching them to walk, instructing them and training them, discovering Himself to them, nurturing, cuddling, and caring for them.
4. **And then this jarring response from Israel to all of Yahweh's tender and compassionate covenant love... Verse 2: The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols.** And this was not just a 'one-off' event or season: their consistent, repeated, recurring response to Yahweh was to spurn His love and turn instead to love and follow after Baals and other false gods. *"God is describing the past fully; He is not romanticizing it. From the beginning, Israel was not content with Him. Their original sin was that in their hearts they never left Egypt. They did not realize who had 'healed' them. All of Yahweh's gifts (including redemption), all of His provisions, all of His providential care and pledged love had never moved them to want Him."* [George M. Schwab, Sr.]
5. **vv 5-7 / So v 1 declares [referring to the Exodus event] "...out of Egypt I called My son."** Now in **v 5**, they will not return to Egypt, but they will go to Assyria which will be like it was in Egypt ... only much worse. NOTE: the repeated play on the word **'return/turn/turning.'** It's used often throughout Hosea. They shall not **'return'** to Egypt, but they shall **'return'** to Egypt-like Assyria.

Because they refused to **'return'** to Yahweh. Israel was bent [addicted] on **'turning'** away from Yahweh.

6. **vv 8-11** / In these verses Yahweh begins to almost wail in pain – from the contortions into which His heart has been wrenched. He must do what His Holiness, justice, and righteousness compels Him to do. His covenant contains both blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. He must keep His words on both counts. But **“How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?”** Admah and Zeboiim were companion cities with **Sodom and Gomorrah** and suffered the same destruction that Yahweh overthrew them with [**Genesis 14.2**]. In fact, this word Yahweh uses to describe the angst of His own heart **'recoils within me'** is the same word for **'overthrown'** in **Genesis 19.25** which Yahweh executed against Sodom and Gomorrah.
7. He must do what He must do in this moment – but this will not be the last word or the last act by any means! He will not utterly destroy Ephraim **‘for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath’** / **vv 8-9**. In other words, His wrath will be measured out – only as much as is required to serve the immediate disciplinary purpose. Yahweh is both a God of strong emotions and a God who will not be ruled by them.
8. **vv 10-11** / At the end of His dealings with Israel, **“His children will come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares Yahweh.”** And isn't this the same promise Yahweh makes back in **ch 3.4-5**: **“For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek YAHWEH their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to YAHWEH and to His goodness in the latter days.”**
9. *So all of this begs the question: How will Yahweh 'bring them back to their homes' as He promises here? Hosea points to a yet future 'in that day' all throughout his messages here. We now know that 'in that day' is the Day of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. It is this 'day' – it is 'today'!* Hosea had no way of knowing the fullness of his prophetic promise when he quoted Yahweh in **Hosea 11.1**: **“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My Son.”** When Yahweh called Israel His 'son' in the Exodus ... and when He called His son, Israel, out of Egypt in the Exodus –that was a pre-enactment for when He would call His Son, Jesus Christ, out of Egypt to come back to Nazareth and assume the earthly role of Yahweh's Israel and as our Savior. Jesus Christ Himself is the new Israel – the only Israel who can be fully faithful to fulfill all the conditions, provisions, promises, and blessings of the covenant. And when we are in Christ by faith, we, too, are made to be citizens of the new Israel and people of God in Him.
10. *“Many years later, Jesus would be taken as a young child down to Egypt in order to escape the murderous intentions of King Herod. After relating how Herod died and the Lord told the parents of Jesus to come home, it is this very verse that Matthew quotes and applies to Jesus: ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son’ (Matthew 2.15). This is not because Matthew is unaware that the verse is speaking of the nation of Israel; it is because he wants his readers to see that Jesus is the new Israel, the One who will finally fulfill Israel's task, the One in whom the promises made to Israel – that through them the Lord would bless the nations – will fully come to pass.”* George M. Schwab, Sr.

“...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise ... And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.” / Galatians 3.26-29 & 6.16