



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

HOSEA 11:1-11

LESSON: GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL—August 23, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Hosea was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He began his ministry during the end of the prosperous but morally declining reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (the upper classes were doing well, but they were oppressing the poor), much like today. Here, Hosea is commanded to marry an unfaithful wife. This would show the Northern Kingdom how they had been unfaithful to God, (their true husband), and married themselves to Baal and the gods of Canaan. Hosea illustrated and was to tell his people that there was danger.

LESSON:

I. HOSEA 11:1-4

11:1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. ¹God looks to the past in Israel's life. *"When Israel was a child, then I loved him."* ²The imagery of Israel as a child highlights the nation's infancy and dependence upon God. In biblical context. The metaphor of a child is used to emphasize innocence and the nurturing relationship God had with Israel. God describes Himself as a father (Jeremiah 3:19). God's love for Israel is a central theme throughout the Old Testament. This love is covenantal, rooted in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is an unconditional love that persists despite Israel's frequent disobedience. He remembers what had happened to Israel when **"he"** was a child.

When we look back at Exodus 3 God spoke to Moses in the *"Burning Bush"* and God was getting him ready to be sent into Egypt to talk to Pharaoh. And in Exodus 4 God was telling Moses all that He would make happen through him when he gets before Pharaoh. God speaks these words from Exodus 4:22-23— ²² *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn. 23 'So I said to you, '**Let My son go** that **he** may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn."* That was a direct command from God to Pharaoh. So here God calls Israel His firstborn.

Here Israel is called **"him"** instead of **"her"** to depict the nation as God's son, because Yahweh, as covenant Father, who adopted the nation in the Exodus emphasizing a paternal relationship and foreshadowing the Messiah. This is when Israel became free. ³By calling Israel His *"firstborn son,"* God is asserting a special relationship with the nation, one of favor, and chosen status among the nations. Israel's role anticipates Jesus Christ, *"the firstborn over all creation"* (Colossians 1:15), and *"the firstborn among many brothers"* (Romans 8:29).

...and called my son out of Egypt—The calling *"out of Egypt"* signifies deliverance and the beginning of a new covenant, and later with Jesus as the central figure in God's redemptive plan. Israel was called of God out of Egypt using Moses, and Jesus was called to go into Egypt as a young child, using an Angel in a dream with Joseph. *"My son, out of Egypt!"* The words are prophetic, because the event which they speak of was prophetic. Jesus, His true Son, and firstborn fulfilled the reality.

¹ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/commentary/hosea-mk/hosea/11/>

² <https://biblehub.com/hosea/11-1.htm>

³ <https://biblehub.com/exodus/4-22.htm>

<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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When Israel was brought out of Egypt, still in the years of innocence, and beloved by God, God used Moses—*“Israel is My son, My firstborn. Exo.4:23 “So I said to you, ‘Let My son go that he may serve Me.’”* But, Matthew 2:13-15 says *“...Behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying Arise, and take the young child and His mother and flee into Egypt...until I bring thee word:... So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet [Hosea]: “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON”.*

11:2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. It seems it all began when the Israelites began practicing the worship of false gods in Egypt, and never completely got rid of those bad habits. They were unfaithful from the beginning, but the more they were called, they didn't want to listen to God's call. God continually reached out to them through prophets and the law, but they repeatedly disobeyed by worshipping Baals, and of other false gods. Israel chose new idols, and distanced themselves. They broke the first rule of the covenant: *“You will have no other gods but me”* (Exodus 20:3). The use of incense in worship was intended for the tabernacle and temple services, symbolizing prayers rising to God (Psalm 141:2), however, Israel's misuse of incense in idol worship highlights their spiritual adultery, and the perversion of true worship.

11:3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. ⁴This phrase highlights God's nurturing role in the development of Israel, represented by Ephraim, the largest tribe in the Northern Kingdom. This is a beautiful picture of a father who patiently and tenderly teaches their child to walk reflecting God's guidance and provisions in their early days. Israel was like a small child whom God helped to walk. It was God who did this. Israel could not see that. When the people of Israel grew up, they did not want to live like true sons. ⁵Part of the 40yrs of wandering was to teach them His ways. God healed their unfaithfulness over and over again. God forgave them, and gave them another chance, but they did not learn their lesson well.

Ephraim was the second son born to Joseph and his Egyptian wife Asenath (Genesis 41:50-52). Consequently, he was a grandson of the patriarch Jacob (also called Israel). In the final days of Jacob's life, he adopted Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and elevated them to the status of his own sons (Genesis 48:5-6). This gave Ephraim a direct share in the inheritance of Israel's family. During that same adoptive blessing, Ephraim received a unique prophecy. Although Manasseh was older, Jacob intentionally placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, foretelling greater prominence for him: “And his father refused and said, ‘I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a multitude of nations.’” (Genesis 48:19)

11:4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. God expressing His tender care and love for Israel. He leads not with harshness or force. ⁶God kept them close enough, that they could not completely wander away. All of the control God kept over them was done in love.

⁴ <https://biblehub.com/hosea/11-3.htm>

⁵ lovetheLord.com/books/Hosea/11-3.html

⁶ lovetheLord.com/books/Hosea/11-4.html

<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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Even though God had control of Ephraim, He still lifted the yoke, so that it could not be heavy to bear. Matthew 11:30 says, *"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* I laid meat unto them means He blessed Ephraim with plenty to eat. He wants to be sure that they have enough food. This is the same way that God fed Israel in the desert (Exodus 16).

7Key points of meaning

- Gentle leadership: The **"cords"** are not restrictive but supportive, helping people feel secure and cared for (bibleoutlined.com).
- Relational love: They represent the **"bands of love"** that bind God's people to Him, not through fear or obligation, but through affection and mutual care (Bible Hub+1).
- Freedom from burdens: The verse also mentions lifting the **"yoke"** from their jaws, symbolizing removing burdens such as sin, oppression, or heavy responsibilities (christianitypath.com+1).
- Nourishment and care: God **"bent down and fed them,"** showing His intimate involvement in their spiritual and emotional well-being (christianitypath.com+1).

II. HOSEA 11:5-7

11:5 He shall not return into the land of Egypt, and the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. We see that God has finally had enough of their unfaithfulness. They will not go back into the land of Egypt where He found them, but Hosea tells them that Assyria will be their king because they refused to repent and return to God, and their captivity will be worse there. So, God has given them over to be punished. And Assyria is the country that will take them into exile. Soon this king will make sure that Israel cannot choose where she lives. Israel did not thank God for what he had done for her. This was her sin, and each time it was worse.

11:6 And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. This is war time when Assyria invades Israel! Assyria will win against Israel in the war. The people of Israel will not be safe, for the walls of their cities will come down. The sword of the enemy will become the sword of God in all the cities they had taken counsel, instead of counsel with God. God uses the sword to keep His covenant. **Consume his branches** meant that all their young men would fall in battle. The people will find it difficult to live without God.

11:7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him. God's people are bent to backsliding. ⁸**"Bent"** suggests *a strong inclination or stubbornness, indicating that the people's hearts are set on apostasy.* **"Backsliding"** involves moving away from a close relationship with God and returning to previous sinful habits or unbelief. Hosea, the prophet to the Northern Kingdom, underscores the spiritual adultery of Israel, as they often worshiped Baal and other deities. It was persistent rebellion of Israel against God. Like many people today who walk with God for a while, the cares of this world cause them to fall away. The Israelites still engage in religious rituals, and called upon God, but He will by no means exalt them.

III. HOSEA 11:8-11

11:8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as

⁷ <https://www.bing.com/search?q=cords+of+a+man+mean+what+in+hosea+11%3A4&pc=GD01&form=GDAVST&pt>

⁸ <https://biblehub.com/hosea/11-7.htm>

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Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. Remember, *Ephraim* represents the northern kingdom of Israel, often used synonymously with *Israel* itself. God is showing great love when He gives this question: How can I give you up, and how shall I deliver you meaning surrender you? God is a God of mercy. He does not want to punish Israel too much. ⁹The word “*Admah*” means earthy. “*Zeboim*” means gazelles. Both cities were allied with Sodom and Gomorrah, and were both destroyed by God due to the wickedness of sin along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14:2, 8). They served as a warning of God’s willingness to judge when necessary. And again, a question goes forth: how shall I make you as Admah (wiped out)? how shall I set you as Zeboim (wasteland)? They were like wild animals who were difficult to tame. But God obviously loved Ephraim and Israel. He was like a loving parent that kept going back forgiving them. They deserved to be totally destroyed, but God cannot bring Himself to do that, for His heart was still upon them and His repentings are kindled (ignited) together (His compassions are stirred). Again, there is hope for Israel. God could never let other nations win against Israel.

11:9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city. God is not a man that He has to explain why He forgives someone. However, the internal dialogue God had with Himself revealed His divine resolve nor His decision to restrain judgment. His love is unconditional and unlimited! If He will not execute His fierce anger or turn His back to destroy Ephraim. The Creator, the sovereign God has that right. He is not man! He is the Holy One that was in the midst of them. The Holy One's presence signifies both judgment and grace. Despite Ephraim's persistent idolatry and rebellion, God chooses not to unleash His complete wrath. This reflects His covenantal love. God's 'anger' is the right attitude for Him to show when His people have done wrong. However, the restraint shown here is a testament to God's character, contrasting human tendencies towards vengeance. But, because God loved them, He wanted them to repent so He could forgive them. But He gives this assurance that He will not come in wrath or enter the city [in judgment]. At the moment they are spared! It's like a stay of execution, for He is longsuffering!

11:10 They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. God sees far beyond what we can see, for He says they shall walk after Him. In the future, Israel will return to God; return from exile. He will make sure that everyone hears. He is depicted as like a roaring lion. The lion has a mighty roar, and when God speaks it will be like the roar of a lion—with Mighty power and Authority! Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah! This will be Israel's time to respond to the LORD with fear and reverence! God requires His people to walk, and to hear (Deuteronomy 10:12). Then the children will tremble from the west. The west represents the Mediterranean region or far off lands of exile from which they will be gathered. This also had happened when they came out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai, they feared and trembled at the voice of God (Genesis 19:16).

11:11 They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord. Israel will hurry home. Birds can travel fast.

⁹ lovethelord.com/books/Hosea/11-8.html
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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Hosea uses the picture of a bird in a good way; a metaphor. A remnant of people will 'fly' back to their homes trembling as a bird out of Egypt (south), and a dove out of the land of Assyria (east) including from the west in verse 10 as God gathers the scattered from all places like a bird and dove flying to their nest being placed back in their houses after exile. Nobody can do that but the LORD! But Israel's true return will only happen because of Christ as He begins and finishes the New Covenant.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON: VERSE 12

11:12 Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints. Well, this is a different twist than what we've ended with in verse 11. Here Ephraim the northern kingdom surrounds God with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit in their worship and covenant relationship with God. It's not just their actions, but also in their hearts! But rest assured, Judah is God's example! Judah the southern kingdom walks with God knowing that the Holy One is in the midst of them. Judah is still faithful with the saints ruled by God. ¹⁰This faithfulness is not just in ritual but in a genuine relationship with God. The faithfulness of Judah is a type of Christ, who perfectly embodies faithfulness to God and fulfills the covenant promises.

SUMMARY:

"God's Love for Israel"

Verses 1-4 – Childhood Love Remembered

When Israel was young, God loved him and called him "out of Egypt." The more the Lord called, the more the people ran to false gods, yet God kept nurturing them—teaching them to walk, lifting them to His cheek, healing them, and leading them "with cords of kindness, with ropes of love."

Verses 5-7 – Discipline Announced

Because Israel stubbornly refuses to return, the nation will not go back to Egypt for refuge; instead, Assyria will rule over them. The sword will swirl through their cities, and their own counsels will destroy them.

Verses 8-9 – Compassion Prevails

God's heart turns within Him. Though justice calls for a fate like Admah and Zeboiim (cities linked with Sodom), He will not unleash total wrath. He will not destroy Ephraim again, for He is God, not a mere man, and His holiness moves Him to mercy.

Verses 10-11 – Future Homecoming

One day the people will follow the Lord. He will roar like a lion, and His children will hurry from the west, trembling as birds from Egypt, and as doves from Assyria. God will settle them in their homes.

Verse 12 – Persistent Deceit

"Ephraim surrounds Me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit," while Judah still wanders restlessly with God—faithful yet unstable.

Hosea 11 is a powerful passage depicting God's unfailing love for the Israelites, despite their continuous rebellion and disobedience. In the chapter, God is portrayed as a loving and caring parent who nurtures and raises His children, yet watches them wander away. However, His love and compassion override the judgment they deserve, promising a future restoration.

¹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/hosea/11-12.htm>

¹¹ <https://biblehub.com/chaptersummaries/hosea/11.htm>

<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

