

RISKING ALL FOR LOVE**God Turns Away****Hosea 9:1–17***“... Woe to them when I turn away from them!”* Hosea 9:12b**Day 1: Read Hosea 9:1–3.**

1. It is probable that Hosea is delivering this sermon during the autumn festival of Sukkoth, a jubilant harvest celebration. God has told his people to rejoice at these times. (Lev. 23:39–43; Deut. 16:13–15) So why is rejoicing prohibited?
2. What will happen to the things that Israel is counting on to bring her joy? (vs. 2) Allow God’s Spirit to reveal in your own heart the things that may be bringing you counterfeit joy. (Reflect on Ps. 16:11.)
3. Ultimately the people will not enjoy harvest in the land because of what devastating consequence of their sin? (vs. 3) From whom do the bounty and privilege of remaining in the land come? (Lev. 25:23)

Day 2: Read Hosea 9:4–7a.

4. What is Hosea getting at when he compares the Israelites’ sacrifices in Assyrian exile to the “bread of mourners” (vs.4)? (Num. 19:11–16) Now this bread is good for only one thing; what is that? (vs. 4c)
5. Can we offer sacrifices that are pleasing to God? (Meditate on Ps. 51:17 and Heb. 13:15–16.)
6. What sad reality is reflected in the rhetorical question, “What will you do on the day of your appointed feasts, on the festival days of the Lord?” (vs. 5)?
7. Describe the calamitous consequences that befall Israel because of her disobedience. (vs. 6; see also Deut. 28:36–48.)

Day 3: Read Hosea 9:7–9.

8. God had given the prophets to Israel for her own good. What are some of the ways a prophet was to be a “watchman” (vs. 8) over Israel? (Hos. 12:10, 13) Compare this with the role God has given to leadership in the church. (Heb.13:17) Take a moment to pray for the leadership in your church.

9. Since the people would not acknowledge Hosea's words as true, what is their inevitable reaction to him? (vs. 7) Why should we not be surprised when this is a response that is elicited when we share the gospel? (1 Cor. 1:18–21)

10. How does Jesus link the persecution of prophets to the world's treatment of his own disciples, including those who follow Jesus today? (Mt. 5:11–12)

Day 4: Read Hosea 9:10–14.

11. Think of a hot, hungry and exhausted traveler amazed to find refreshing grapes or figs in the middle of a desert; then unfold the meaning of Hosea's imagery in this passage. (vs. 10; Hos. 13:5–6a)

12. What is the sordid result of Israel's choice to give her heart to gods other than the true God? (vs. 10b) Is there something in your life that you are cherishing which threatens to distort the image of God in you?

13. The growth of the nation of Israel in the eighth century B.C. was an aspect of her glory; how does this glory "fly away" (vs. 11)? (vss. 11–12)

14. How might God's turning away from Israel (vs. 12) be a severe mercy?

Day 5: Read Hosea 9:11–17.

15. Compare the curses of today's reading with the blessings of Deuteronomy 28:2–14. List some of the things that the Israelites are forfeiting.

16. As Christians, nothing can separate us from the love of God, but what are some benefits that we forfeit temporarily when we turn from God to embrace deceptive loves? Spend some time confessing to God where you are disobediently allowing yourself to be lured towards unfaithfulness to Him.

17. Israel is sentenced to be "wanderers among the nations" (vs. 17). Is this the last word that God has for them? (Rom. 11:1–5)