

Hosea

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, . . . the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Book of Hosea using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to Reading the Prophets*—especially the section on Hosea—will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don’t miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church’s criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God’s unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church’s living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit’s guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you’ll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shining 12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure. 14 Do all th tioning, ¹⁵that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven . . . earth . . . under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec-

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God’s g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 perverse** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

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Prepare

Read the Introduction to Hosea, paying particular attention to *The Prophet and His Times*, the *Message of the Prophet*, and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of Hosea to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of Hosea, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on Hosea as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **Topical Essay: The Word of the Lord.** Indicating as it does the delivery of a message that God wishes to communicate to man through Israel, how is the content of the revealed message announced, and by whom? Because there is a tight connection between the act of speaking and the content of what is spoken, how is this quite significant when a word comes from God? Besides its power, for what is God's word also revered? In the Old Testament, how does the word of the Lord seem to take on personhood itself, and how is this further developed in the New Testament? How is the analogy between God's word in Scripture and God's Word in the Incarnation made explicit by the Church?
2. **1:2.** Whether Hosea's wife was guilty of sexual sin before or after they were wedded, what kind of action was marrying a woman who gave herself to "lovers" other than her husband, and what did it symbolize? Why did prophets sometimes perform shocking deeds? How do some scholars, ancient as well as modern, prefer to view Hosea's marriage? Nevertheless, what indication does the text give? How do St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Thomas Aquinas view this issue? As for her great harlotry, what does the sexual promiscuity of Hosea's wife symbolize?
3. **1:10—2:1.** To what does Hosea's perspective shift in these verses? What is the Lord ready to do in the near term, and what will he do after a period of exile? What does the prophet call this time of future restoration?
4. **1:10.** What oath does "like the sand of the sea" recall? If kinship with God is a grace of the covenant that made the Israelites the Lord's adopted "sons", what does the restoration of divine sonship imply? What does Paul quote this verse to claim? Why do many find it odd that he cites Hosea? If Paul, however, has not misread or misapplied the text, what does he recognize about the northern tribes? How is northern Israel's return to sonship thus achieved?

For application

1. **1:2–3.** What are the limits of your willingness to obey the Lord? While he would never direct you to do anything immoral, if he asked you to do something that appeared imprudent, controversial, or foolish, how would you decide whether or not to obey?
2. **1:4.** The *Catechism* describes one's name as "the icon of the person" (CCC 2158). What does that mean to you? What is the significance of your own name? If you were to name a child, what sort of name would you select, and why?
3. **1:6.** Hosea named his children for a prophetic purpose, even though the name might later prove an embarrassment for the child. Since the name of a person is a "sign of the dignity of the one who bears it" (CCC 2158), why give a child a name that invites disrespect or ridicule? What sort of name should Christians avoid giving their children (CCC 2156)?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:2–23.** On what grounds does the Lord bring charges against unfaithful Israel? What does it mean that the punishments imposed are restorative? Even though Israel has sought the pleasures of other gods (the "lovers" of 2:5, 7) and forgotten her Spouse, what does God plan to do and why?
2. **2:2.** What does the prophet contend has happened to Israel's covenant with God? What does it mean that God divorces the faithless tribes of northern Israel for a time? How is the Israelites giving of themselves to the worship of other gods like harlotry and adultery? To what fact does the use of sexual metaphors for idolatry provide a mirror?
3. **Word Study: Baal (2:8).** As a noun, what does *ba'al* mean? In relation to property and marriage, what sense does it carry? What does the verbal form of the Hebrew root mean? In a cultic context, for whom is the title *Ba'al* frequently used? In Canaanite mythology, what epithet did Baal bear? Being a storm god, for what was he invoked? What did service to this false deity include? How does the OT present Baal? In what ways is the cult of Baal, which ensnared the Israelites at many points in their history, strongly denounced?
4. **2:19.** How is betrothal in ancient Israel unlike the period of engagement before marriage? What were betrothed couples, having given their consent to be wedded, in the eyes of the Mosaic Law, considered to be even though they customarily lived apart for a time before cohabitating and initiating marital relations? What will characterize the new nuptial

bond between God and his people? How is the OT image of God and Israel as husband and wife taken up in the NT? Upon what, in part, is this based? To what does the Hebrew *hesed* refer?

5. **2:21–23.** How does Israel’s restoration affect the names of Hosea’s children? What message does the name of his son Jezreel (meaning “God will sow”) announce? What will happen to the names of his daughter Not pitied and his younger son Not my people? What does Paul cite 2:23 to indicate? What does Peter likewise draw from this passage?

For application

1. **2:6–13.** What is “tough love”? What is the point of making the life of a problem child difficult for a time? How has the Lord used “tough love” to shape up your spiritual life?
2. **2:11.** The note for this verse alludes to the problem of formalism in Israelite worship—that is, going through the motions of religion without serving the Lord in their hearts. How does this observation apply to the way some Christians celebrate feasts like Christmas and Easter? How do some popular customs obscure or obfuscate what these feasts are all about?
3. **2:14.** Why would a person go, as Jesus did, into a waterless desert to seek the Lord? What advantage would such a hostile environment provide? As an image of spiritual purgation, have spiritual deserts—times of dryness or God’s seeming absence—ever actually served to draw you toward him? If so, in what way?
4. **2:15.** Think back to a time when you had a conversion experience or a major turning toward the Lord. What happened then? How did it affect your spiritual life? How has your relationship with the Lord developed since then; that is, how have you either grown or fallen back? If you need a renewal of faith, how will you go about obtaining it?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:1–5.** What does God instruct Hosea to do, and what action does it symbolize? While some think Hosea is told to marry, not Gomer, but another loose woman, why does his marrying a second wife seem unlikely?
2. **3:1.** Who is Hosea’s wife’s paramour? What kind of love is God’s love for his people? With what is God’s love contrasted? What is a raisin cake, and to whom was it offered?
3. **3:3.** How will Hosea keep his wife from consorting with other men? Why will the couple not have marital relations for a time? What does this signify about Israel, whom Gomer represents?
4. **3:5.** Who are “the children of Israel”? Why will they seek the Lord? What will the time of restoration see, and what days will it recall? Since the prophesied reunion did not occur before the disappearance of the Davidic monarchy in 586 B.C., who must the figure of David their king be? Who does the NT proclaim him to be? How does the conversion of Samaritans in the early Church fit into this picture? With what kind of fear are the children of Israel to come to the Lord? What are the “latter days”?

For application

1. **3:1.** Adultery within a marriage does not invalidate the marriage covenant, though it may prompt a separation. What trial does the Lord’s command to “love a woman who is beloved of a paramour” mean for the aggrieved spouse? According to the note for this verse, what kind of love would attempt restoration of the marriage?
2. **3:2.** Reclaiming a wandering spouse is not as simple as paying money, but it demonstrates the need to do something concrete. How does one restore trust and fidelity in a broken marriage? What are the options if the spouse refuses to reconcile (cf. CCC 1649–51)?
3. **3:3.** The note for this verse refers to the virtue of chastity. How is chastity to be practiced within a marriage? How do the vows recited at the wedding ceremony suggest ways to practice marital chastity?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:1–19.** What process do these verses initiate? What is the root cause of the corruption of the priests, prophets, and people? What is coming to northern Israel as a result?
2. **4:8.** What were priests given with every sin offering? How could this become a self-interested arrangement? What would corrupt priests be disinclined to do?

3. **4:14.** What did men and women do with priests and priestesses at idol shrines? Though the point is disputed, what do biblical texts read in light of Canaanite mythology suggest to many scholars? What is one reason idolatry is described as harlotry in the Bible?
4. **4:15.** What warning is the prophet giving the Southern Kingdom of Judah? As the location of an unlawful cult shrine, to which town of Gilgal is the prophet referring? How does “Beth-aven” translate? For what town is it a derogatory slur? As an oath formula, what is wrong with invoking the Lord’s holy name in the house of an idol?

For application

1. **4:1–3.** How do environmental problems result from the sins listed in verse 2? How would knowledge of God work to correct such problems?
2. **4:4–6.** How would you rate the level of knowledge of the faith in your parish? What types of catechetical programs are available there for both children and adults? How often do the clergy in your parish (priests and deacons) actually teach catechism? What catechetical responsibilities do they delegate to others? What should they retain for themselves?
3. **4:12.** According to the note for this verse, a “spirit of harlotry” is a “perverse infatuation with idolatry”. How does that infatuation manifest itself in our modern era? How might that spirit infect even baptized Christians?
4. **4:14.** As head of his wife and family, what responsibility does the husband have for the spiritual welfare of the household (cf. Eph 5:23–28)? If the men leave that responsibility to their wives and do nothing themselves, how likely is it that the children, especially boys, will retain the faith when they become adults?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1–15.** What is the Lord ready to do to Ephraim (= northern Israel)? While judgment on Israel in the north has been a recurring theme in previous chapters, what new revelation does the prophet give here? How did Judah respond to Hosea’s warning in 4:15?
2. **5:1.** What three groups is the prophet addressing in this verse? What does the mention of a hunting trap suggest about the locations mentioned in this verse? To what towns does the name “Mizpah” refer? What is “Tabor”, and how does Christian tradition identify it?
3. **5:7.** Why does the prophet call the Northern Israelites “alien children”? In the words of Deuteronomy, why are they no longer God’s children? What time does the new moon normally indicate?
4. **5:10.** How is the dishonest practice of stealing a neighbor’s property done? How does the Mosaic Law address this problem? What territory do scholars think it likely that Judah was claiming? How will the Lord pour out his wrath on Judah?

For application

1. **5:4.** What kind of deed would not permit one to return to God? How can a “spirit of harlotry” reinforce such a deed? What deed would be necessary to enable a return to God after all?
2. **5:5.** How are pride and arrogance related? How are they different? What obstacles do these vices place in the way of effective repentance? What is their antidote?
3. **5:12.** What does a moth do to clothes? What does dry rot do to wood? How do these figures describe the state of a soul habituated to patterns of sin?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:1–3.** What has happened to Israel, who is being called to repentance? What does Hosea reveal is needed for national restoration? What ancient belief does the language of the passage presuppose? What song does the picture of God reviving his people after a time of judgment and death recall?
2. **6:2.** Why is the third day after death significant? When was a corpse thought to decompose in earnest? What does the hope of Israel’s resurrection “on the third day” anticipate? As the Messiah, how does Jesus fulfill this hope? According to St. Jerome, how does the Lord not only heal but revive the entire human race? According to St. Augustine, when did Hosea foretell that Christ’s Resurrection would occur?

3. **6:6.** What does the Lord want more than animal sacrifices? What is the contrast between what God does and does not desire a Semitic way of stressing? How are life and liturgy meant to form a unity? Why did Jesus cite Hosea's words against the Pharisees? According to St. Cyril of Alexandria, how is knowledge of God better than sacrifices and burnt offerings when attained in Christ? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, although God does not need external sacrifices, why does he wish them to be offered?
4. **6:8.** Where is Ramoth Gilead? Why was bloodshed in Gilead especially disturbing?

For application

1. **6:4.** If you make New Year's resolutions, how many of them do you keep? If, during your morning prayer, you resolve to do a religious act such as to pray a daily Rosary, how long does the resolution last? How like wishful thinking is your determination to know the Lord?
2. **6:5.** How many examples can you think of for words or expressions that actually change reality (e.g., "You're fired!")? Which words in the liturgy have the same effect? For what does the symbolism of a sharp sword coming from the mouth of the rider in Rev 19:15 stand?
3. **6:6.** In the play *Fiddler on the Roof*, when his wife protests that she prepares his food and mends his clothes, Tevye repeatedly asks, "But do you love me?" How might his question address the tendency to substitute doing things for God in place of loving him? How can serving God from a sense of obligation be transformed into a service of love?

Chapter 7

For understanding

1. **7:1–16.** Of the abominations of northern Israel that Hosea continues to rail against, which are the deeds singled out for condemnation? What period is the background of these evils, and with what did it end?
2. **7:8.** How does Ephraim mix himself with the peoples, and with what result? To what does reliance on foreign powers for military help and maintenance of power amount?
3. **7:14.** What is Israel's devotion to the Lord like? For what was self-laceration used? What did the Mosaic Law say about it?
4. **7:16.** To what is the scattering of rebellious Israel to distant nations compared? What did Moses declare that, when sinful Israel went into exile, life would be like?

For application

1. **7:1–7.** What sorts of moral corruption lead to the fall of a nation? How do these vices sap the nation's moral strength? How do such considerations apply to the moral health of our country?
2. **7:8.** If, according to the note for this verse, the alliances of Israel with Assyria and Egypt amount to spurning the Lord, what do modern alliances mean for us? What modern nation would rely on the Lord in preference to forming military alliances? What does the answer say about where we place our faith?
3. **7:9.** How would military alliances with foreign countries actually threaten the security of ancient Israel? What, for example, would be the interests of Assyria and Egypt in making an alliance with a small nation like Israel? How do the alliances we make potentially threaten our own national security?

Chapter 8

For understanding

1. **8:1–14.** Why is doom pronounced on Israel? Though the northern tribes claim to know God, of what are they guilty? If judgment is certain for Israel in the north, what will happen to Judah in the south?
2. **8:4.** What did the final years of the Northern Kingdom of Israel see with regard to its kings? If this was not the tragic result of seeking the Lord's will, of what was it a result? From the perspective of Judah in the south, why were the northern kings illegitimate from the start? What does Hosea prophesy that northern Israel's restoration will include? Who forged calf and goat idols for northern Israel?
3. **8:7.** What does this proverb mean that Israel will get? Had Israel sown righteousness, what would it have reaped?
4. **8:8.** Why does Hosea describe the exile of Israel's northern tribes and their absorption into foreign nations as an accomplished fact? Indeed, when did the process begin?

For application

1. **8:1.** When you see vultures circling overhead, for what do you think are they looking? What does the image of the vulture suggest about the condition of ancient Israel? What are some indications that a person's spiritual life is nearly dead?
2. **8:2.** Jesus warned that some who say to him "Lord, Lord" will hear him reply to them, "I never knew you" (Mt 7:22–23). How does Jesus recognize those who are genuine disciples?
3. **8:6.** Is the destruction of idols that Hosea threatens here nothing more than iconoclastic vandalism? How is destruction of idols different from the defacement of statues and images of Jesus and the saints (CCC 2129, 2132)?
4. **8:13.** What sorts of prayer is the Lord most likely to answer? What sorts is he more likely to ignore?

Chapter 9

For understanding

1. **9:1–17.** What do these verses describe? Having become "deeply corrupted", what are the northern tribes about to face? How will the pain of exile be increased?
2. **9:4.** What are libations? How will the obligations of divine worship be unfulfillable for Israel in exile? What is mourner's bread? What will the exiles have to eat?
3. **9:8.** How does Hosea describe himself? What is a true prophet like?
4. **9:10.** What is Baal-peor? What does the apostasy that Israel committed at Peor in Num 25:1–5 show? How offensive to God did Israel become? Contrary to the claim that the good or evil of an action is not related to its object, how does a person become abominable to God? According to Thomas Aquinas, to what is the evil of his action thus related?

For application

1. **9:1.** Our nation is accustomed to abundant harvests. To what do we attribute them? What do we do with them? According to the note for this verse, who deserves the thanks for them?
2. **9:3.** The Mosaic Law distinguished between clean and unclean foods because the Israelites were to be holy as God is holy (Lev 11:44–45). How would being forced to eat unclean food in Assyria have made them unholy or defiled? What did Jesus say defiles a person (Mt 15:16–18)?
3. **9:8.** The note for this verse refers to the prophet's duty as a watchman in times of danger. Who are the prophetic watchmen in today's Church? If clergy have the threefold office of priest, prophet, and king, what should their prophetic role be? What of the prophetic role of the laity?
4. **9:15.** For certain grave sins, the Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication. What is its purpose? What is the excommunicated person not allowed to do (CCC 1463)? What concern should the Church have for the excommunicated person? Under what conditions would this person be received back?

Chapter 10

For understanding

1. **10:1.** What is a traditional image for Israel? Although God blessed his people with prosperity, how did they misuse their abundance? Besides forbidding the service of idols, what else does the Torah forbid? What are the pillars mentioned here, and what was Israel forbidden to do with them?
2. **10:8.** What are high places? What does the Hebrew word "Aven" mean? To what town do some see a reference? What will happen to the idol shrines of northern Israel? Overwhelmed with suffering, for what will the people beg? When Jesus cites these words in a prediction of doom on Jerusalem, what is he telling the women who weep over his Passion? Where does a similar scene appear in Revelation?
3. **10:11.** How were oxen used in threshing grain? What did the process do? Because it was not a particularly laborious task for the animal, what could it do freely? Since these days of ease are over, what does Hosea insist that Israel and Judah, because of their sin, will do?

For application

1. **10:1.** In Deuteronomy, Moses warns the people of the pitfalls of material prosperity (Deut 8:11–17). Why would prosperity tempt the chosen people to forget their God? How has our enjoyment of material prosperity drawn us away from him?

2. **10:4.** Suppose a couple at a wedding ceremony were to treat the marriage vows as a mere formula and the ceremony as just a hoop to jump through. What poisonous weeds are likely to sprout in that relationship? How might that marriage come under judgment?
3. **10:8.** What is the most frightening experience you can remember, especially if you thought your life was in danger? To where did you want to fly, or where did you wish to hide? What, if any, thoughts about God came to mind then? What impact did the experience have on your later life?
4. **10:12.** What is fallow ground? How would a farmer prepare it for sowing? How does Hosea's metaphor apply to seeking the Lord?

Chapter 11

For understanding

1. **11:1–11.** With what do these verses deal? With tender affection, what did God do for Israel? But like many adolescents, when Israel grew stubborn and disobedient along the way, what did God have to do? Even then, what was God's attitude toward his rebellious son? In which of his parables did Jesus tell a similar story about the merciful Fatherhood of God?
2. **11:8.** What are "Admah" and "Zeboim"? What is the point here?
3. **11:9.** Unlike men, who show no restraint when thrown into a violent rage, how does the Lord temper his wrath? How will God stop short of obliterating Israel's northern tribes? Since, in strict theological terms, God is unchangeable and has no emotions, what are biblical descriptions of God being moved by emotions called, and how should they be taken?

For application

1. **11:1.** Through the Gospel, God calls each of us out of our own personal Egypt, our own "house of bondage". If you have had an experience that led you to conversion, from what were you led out? If you cannot recall a distinct conversion experience, how have you grown more and more detached from sin, especially the sins of your youth? Either way, into what relationship with himself has the Lord led you?
2. **11:3.** The expression "teach . . . how to walk" can have multiple meanings. How do toddlers learn to walk? What is the role of the parents in this process? How does God teach us to walk? What is our role in this?
3. **11:7.** At certain points in their lives, usually during adolescence, children rebel against their parents. Why do they rebel? How can parents affirm their authority without alienating their children? If the rebellion becomes obstinate to the point of breaking off relations with the family, what should loving parents do?
4. **11:9.** The note for this verse reminds readers that God has no emotions, yet Scripture proclaims his compassion. When did the incarnate Son of God show emotion? How did he demonstrate compassion? How has this divine compassion manifested itself in your life?

Chapter 12

For understanding

1. **12:1.** To what does herding the wind amount? What are treaty alliances with Egypt and Assyria denounced as?
2. **12:2–6.** As Hosea recalls it, how does the personal history of Jacob foreshadow the national history of Israel? What is the implied message?
3. **12:7.** To what do false balances refer?
4. **12:9.** How does the Greek LXX read for this verse? What is "the appointed feast"? What do the people of Israel do during this feast?

For application

1. **12:3.** In some ways, the spiritual life can be described as a continual striving with God. What is this wrestling match all about? Just as Jacob refused to give up the fight until God blessed him (Gen 32:26), how determined are you to cling to God until he blesses you?
2. **12:6.** Psalm 27 encourages us to "wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD." Why does waiting for the Lord require strength and courage? With what obstacles do we contend? Whose help do we need?

3. **12:9.** What was the point of dwelling in makeshift booths for a week during the Feast of Tabernacles? How does the symbolism of that activity contrast with the false confidence in riches of the previous verse? On whom must we depend for everything we have?
4. **12:13.** Read the note for this verse. What does a prophet do? In what way was Moses a prophet? Why is Jesus referred to in the NT as a prophet (e.g., Lk 24:19; Jn 9:17)? As a member of the Body of Christ, what makes you a prophet?

Chapter 13

For understanding

1. **13:1.** What accounts in part for Ephraim becoming the largest and strongest of the northern tribes of Israel? From which tribe was Jeroboam I, the first king of northern Israel? What kind of death did Ephraim die? How is Israel's restoration after judgment thus envisioned? Ironically, what gifts was the god Baal believed to confer?
2. **13:2.** If idols are not actually gods, what are they? To what does men kissing calves refer? Why did bulls represent gods in the iconography of the ancient Near East? Which one do they seem to represent here?
3. **13:13.** What do the pangs of childbirth represent? To what is Ephraim, who refuses to repent, compared? In the ancient world, in what did this typically result?
4. **13:14.** How can the Hebrew also be translated? Literally, how do these lines read? To what does this passage, which promises hope and restoration after a time of judgment, amount? What forces are taunted like defeated enemies? How do others interpret these questions? Citing a Greek version of this passage in 1 Cor 15:55, in terms of what does Paul see its fulfillment? According to this reading, what does Hosea announce? According to St. Jerome, how did Jesus bring about the death of death and its realm?

For application

1. **13:1–2.** What happens spiritually to the person who commits mortal sin (CCC 1856–61)? How is the condition of that person exacerbated by repeated mortal sin? What makes repentance so difficult in that latter case?
2. **13:4.** In Acts 4, Peter testifies before the Sanhedrin that “there is salvation in no one else [than Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven ... by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Why do people take offense at a statement like this? Despite their objections, why does the Church insist that Jesus is the only savior? What does the Church teach about the salvific effectiveness of other religions (CCC 842–45)?
3. **13:14.** What thought have you given to the prospect of your own death? How confident are you in the mercy of God at that moment? What hope do you derive from the Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead?

Chapter 14

For understanding

1. **14:1–9.** To whom is Hosea's final plea for repentance addressed? Since judgment and exile are already certain for the prophet's own generation, what about later generations?
2. **14:2.** By what is the prayer of penitent faith that follows in quotation marks inspired? This verse translates the Greek LXX rather than the Hebrew. How does the Hebrew read? Either way, to what does the text refer? In Heb 13:15, what kind of sacrifice are believers encouraged to offer? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, how is the voice to be considered an act of satisfaction in prayer?
3. **14:4.** How will the Lord heal Israel's faithlessness? In what various ways does Scripture speak of this? What does the same divine love that underlies Israel's election as a chosen people also underlie? How was God's persistent love for his people earlier symbolized by Hosea?
4. **14:9.** What does the closing appeal, written in the style of a biblical wisdom saying, urge hearers (and readers) to do? Why?

For application

1. **14:2.** In your private prayer, how often do you pray aloud? What are some advantages of praying spontaneously and vocally? If you have ever overheard someone praying aloud, what was your impression? How, for example, might over-hearing someone pray aloud encourage you in your prayer?

Hosea

2. **14:3.** Why do spiritual writers, such as John of the Cross, stress the need for detachment from material things? What is the spiritual danger in having material resources? Ultimately, where should one's resources lie?
3. **14:5–7.** Healthy plants, such as the lily, often emit a pleasant fragrance. What is the "odor of sanctity"? What sort of fragrance does holiness produce?