

As you begin to study, pray that GOD will speak to you through His word. Read the chapter a few times, know the contents.

## **Chapter 12**

### **THE CASE AGAINST ISRAEL IS CONTINUED:**

With such a strong declaration of God's love, as found in chapter 11, which we noticed in our last study, one would think that Israel's heart might have been broken and she might have fallen on her knees before God in confession and repentance seeking reconciliation with God. Yet, the words in verse 1 state the main intent of Israel: "*Ephraim (that was another name for the nation of Israel) feeds on the wind; he pursues the east wind all day and multiplies lies and violence.*"

Then, in verses 2 through 5, Hosea relates that from the very beginning, God had cared for the family of Jacob. In fact, God had spoken face to face with Jacob. In addition, God had guided the descendants of Jacob through the wilderness. But now Israel has given this all up. They have turned their back upon God. Instead of honoring God, they have honored themselves. Instead of worshipping God, they have worshipped others.

Although God's punishment is about to come upon them, He still challenges them to return to Him and to live in confident dependence upon God. Should that not be our constant theme in our teaching and in our witnessing? People we probably know have wandered away from God. They are like those sheep which Isaiah describes in Isaiah 53 as sheep which have turned each to his own way. Our task is to call them to come back to God. God still proclaims, "*Come back to Me. Worship only Me. Be dependent upon Me. And I will bless you.*"

God does not leave us here to build monuments to ourselves like some Christians do, but we are to promote the Kingdom of God. He has left us here as His agents of reconciliation. We are His ambassadors. We are His witnesses. We have no other task than to touch others and point them to Jesus before the judgment of God descends.

What was the worst thing they did, besides worshipping false gods?

Since Jacob died some time ago, why do you think certain events from his life are spoken of in this passage?

Who had Jacob wrestled all night with? V4 Back your answer up.

What advice did he receive in verse 6?

In verses 7 and 8, what did Israel boast about? Do you have areas of life where you are tempted to brag?

Why was their boasting deceptive?

How did Hosea continue to use Israel's history to warn them of God's future judgment?

What is promised in verse 9?

How does your spiritual history give you respect for God's justice?

Where, or with whom, do you need to be more just, without sacrificing love?

What is meant, in verse 12, about "serving for a wife"?