

Historical Background for Hosea

- I. Circumstances leading to the division of the Kingdom:
 - A. Solomon's idolatry (I Kings 11:1–13)
 - B. Prophecy upon Jeroboam (I Kings 11:26–40)
 - C. Rehoboam's folly (I Kings 12:1–24)
 - D. Jeroboam's folly (I Kings 12:25–33)
 - E. God cries out against the Golden Calves (I Kings 13:1–10)
 - F. God's judgment on Jeroboam (I Kings 14:1–20)
- II. The Kings of Israel:
 - A. The First Dynasty–
 - 1. Jeroboam, twenty-two years
 - 2. Nadab, about two years (assassinated)
 - B. The Second Dynasty–
 - 3. Baasha, twenty-four years
 - 4. Elah, two years (assassinated)
 - C. Civil War–
 - 5. (a) Zimri, seven days (suicide)
 - 5. (b) Tibni (died in battle/assassinated)
 - D. The Third Dynasty–
 - 6. Omri, twelve years
 - 7. Ahab, twenty-two years
 - 8. Ahaziah, two years
 - 9. Jehoram, twelve years (assassinated)
 - E. The Fourth Dynasty–
 - 10. Jehu, twenty-eight years
 - 11. Jehoahaz, seventeen years
 - 12. Jehoash, sixteen years
 - 13. Jeroboam II, forty-one years
 - 14. Zachariah, six months (assassinated)
 - F. Decline and Fall–
 - 15. Shallum, one month (assassinated)
 - 16. Menahem, ten years
 - 17. Pekahiah, two years (assassinated)
 - 18. Pekah, twenty years (assassinated)
 - 19. Hoshea, nine years (deposed and imprisoned)
- III. God's Prophets to Israel & Judah during the division:
 - A. Ahijah the Shilonite (I Kings 11:29; 12:15; 15:29; II Chronicles 10:15)
 - B. Shemaiah (I Kings 12:22; II Chronicles 12:15)
 - C. Iddo (II Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 13:22)
 - D. Azariah (II Chronicles 15:1–15)
 - E. Hanani (II Chronicles 16:7–13)
 - F. Jehu (I Kings 16:1–7; II Chronicles 19:2; 20:34)
 - G. Elijah (I Kings 17–II Kings 1)
 - H. Elisha (I Kings 19–II Kings 13)
 - I. Jonah (II Kings 14:24–25)
 - J. Micaiah (II Kings 22; II Chronicles 18)
 - K. Joel (possible contemporary of Hosea or Amos, maybe II Kings 21:10–11)
 - L. Amos (Amos 1:1)
 - M. Hosea (Hosea 1:1)
- III. Social & Spiritual Conditions in Israel During Hosea's Tenure:
 - A. The Golden Calves
 - B. The Spirit of Whoredom
 - C. Oppression
 - D. Drunkenness

- E. Territorial Losses
- F. Governmental Chaos
- G. Assyrian Domination
- H. General unbelief and immorality

Generalizations Concerning Hosea & the Prophetic Office

1. Of the three anointed or messianic occupations only the office of prophet was “unrestricted regarding pedigree” (Barrett, p. 5). “Prophets became prophets only by the special call of God.”
2. “The very fact that Hosea was a prophet points to the Lord Jesus Christ.” He is both a type of the Christ and a harbinger (Luke 4:18; Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:23).
3. Anointing symbolized the sanctifying of the person for the work. The oil may be an emblem of the Holy Spirit which was received in many cases by those anointed (I Samuel 16:13; II Chronicles 24:20; II Kings 2:15; cf. Acts 10:38; Hebrews 1:9; Psalms 45:6–7).
4. The office of prophet is one to which men are appointed (Hosea 1:2; Jeremiah 1:4–10). It is one of authority (Hosea 1:2, 4, 6, 9: 3:1). The office of prophet is one for which men are empowered (Micah 3:8; Isaiah 59:21; cf. Hosea 9:7, also Romans 9:25; I Peter 2:10).
5. All prophets, priests and kings were lesser messiahs and types of the Ideal Messiah. All the features that mark them for their offices are perfectly and ideally true of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. God initiated the expectation of the Messiah through the prophetic office (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18). Every passing prophet increased the expectation of His arrival (Matthew 21:11, 46; John 7:40; Luke 7:16). There is a sense in which every prophet shared the work of John the Baptist in preparing the way for His coming (John 3:28–36). This is the mission of every prophet and the very fact that one is a prophet achieves this mission. Hosea was such a type and prophet.
7. Christ executes the office of a Prophet in revealing to us by His word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Barrett, p. 13). A prophet is God’s representative to man; who better than the Son of God, Himself God, to represent God to man? (Hebrews 1:1–3).
8. We are to look at a prophet and learn something about Christ. Hosea is such a prophet, we are to learn something about Christ from him.
9. The prophecy of Hosea is unique in that it is the only prophetic book written by a Northerner to the North about the North. This does not diminish its universal message, but puts it into a class of its own and gives it a compelling authority respecting its original recipients (I Kings 19:18).
10. The religious chaos of Hosea’s time not much different than our own: pluralism, corrupted Christianity, moral decay, advanced unbelief and skepticism. Yet, God raised up a prophet with a message of hope and sent him to live among, deal with and preach to that wicked generation salvation.
11. Hosea falls into two main sections: (1) the first three chapters which provide the biographical background of Hosea’s marital experience and the basis for the prophets burden; (2) the sermons which indict Israel, warn of impending judgment and express a message of hope and salvation for the remnant.
12. Outlines of the book vary, but there are several obvious transitions in the book which center on a message of hope for Israel rooted in God’s faithfulness to them (1:10–2:1; 2:14–23; 3:4–5; 6:1–3; 11:8–11; 14:1–8).

Outline of Hosea

I. The Adulterous Wife & the Faithful Husband (1:1-3:5)

- A. Introduction to the book (1:1)
- B. The Marriage of Hosea to Gomer (1:2-9)
 - 1. Hosea's marriage to Gomer (1:2)
 - 2. The Children of Hosea and Gomer (1:3-9)
- C. The Application of the Adultery of Gomer (1:9-2:23)
 - 1. God's faithfulness announced and reaffirmed (1:10-11)
 - 2. Israel's sin of spiritual adultery (2:2-5)
 - 3. God's judgment (2:6-13)
 - 4. The restoration of Israel (2:14-23)
- D. The Restoration of Gomer to Hosea (3:1-5)
 - 1. Hosea loves Gomer as God loved Israel (3:1-3)
 - 2. Israel will be restored in the latter days (3:4-5)

II. The Adulterous Israel & the Faithful LORD (4:1-14:9)

- A. The spiritual adultery of Israel (4:1-6:3)
 - 1. The sins of Israel (4:1-19)
 - 2. Judgment upon Israel (5:1-14)
 - 3. Eventual restoration of Israel (5:15-6:3)
- B. Israel's refusal to repent (6:4-8:14)
 - 1. Willful transgression (6:4-11)
 - 2. Willful refusal (7:1-16)
 - 3. Willful idolatry (8:1-14)
- C. Judgment upon Israel (9:1-10:15)
 - 1. Dispersion (9:1-9)
 - 2. Barrenness (9:10-17)
 - 3. Destruction (10:1-15)
- D. The restoration of Israel to the LORD (11:1-14:9)
 - 1. The LORD'S love for Israel (11:1-12)
 - 2. Israel's continuing sin (12:1-13:16)
 - 3. The LORD'S promise to restore Israel (14:1-9)

III. Alternate Outline of the Discourses (4:1–14:9)

- A. Evidence of Ignorance of God and a Statement of Hope (4:1–6:3)
- B. Evidence of Disloyalty to God and a Statement of Hope (6:4–11:11)
- C. Evidence of Faithlessness to God and a Statement of Hope (11:12–14:9)

HOSEA: Chapter One

1 ¶ The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea...The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. These words constitute Hosea's claim for inspiration (Romans 9:22–35; I Peter 2:10; cf. Jeremiah 14:1; 47:1; 49:34; Joel 1:1; Micah 1:1). Thus, Hosea is one of many by whom God spoke unto the fathers (Hebrews 1:1; Luke 1:70; 24:44). He was a contemporary of Jonah (II Kings 14:25), Isaiah (Isaiah 1:1), Micah (Micah 1:1) and Amos (Amos 1:1). He is one of the many prophets whom God sent to testify against Israel (II Kings 17:13–14; Daniel 9:6; cf. Acts 7:51).

Hosea, the name Hosea means "salvation." It appears only in vss. 1 and 2 in the OT; it appears as Osee in Romans 9:25. Joshua was called by a longer form of the name until renamed by Moses (Numbers 13:8, 16). The last king of Israel is known by this name (II Kings 15:30) as are two others (I Chronicles 27:20; Nehemiah 10:23). The son of Beeri which means "fountained" (cf. Genesis 21:19). It is often conjectured whether the names of the prophets have intentional significance respecting their prophecies. It does not always appear so, but certainly the message of Hosea was water from a fountain of salvation to Israel.

In the days of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:1; cf. 14:21; II Chronicles 26:1), **Jotham** (II Kings 15:32-38; II Chronicles 27:1-9), **Ahaz** (II Kings 16:1-20; II Chronicles 28:1-27) **and Hezekiah** (II Kings 18:1-20:21; II Chronicles 29:1-32:33) the kings of Judah. Of these four kings, Ahaz is remembered as the worst and Hezekiah as the best. The reign of Hezekiah began in the third year of Hoshea whose reign ended in the sixth year of Hezekiah, or his own ninth year, which was 721 B.C. The ministry of Hosea covered approximately 65 years. Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, the father of Uzziah. Uzziah began to reign in the 27th year of Jeroboam II (II Kings 15:1–2). Jeroboam II and Uzziah were contemporaries for 14 years. It would have been in these years that Hosea began to prophesy. Probably commencing his work as a young prophet near the death of Jeroboam and ending his work as an old man shortly after Hezekiah came to the throne.

2 ¶ The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.

Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms. God commanded that Hosea marry a woman who was taken with the "spirit of the age" (cf. Genesis 6:2; James 4:4). She was an idolater (Hosea 4:11–12; 5:4). She was not a literal prostitute at the time of their marriage (cf. Genesis 38:24), but she was a woman who imbibed the spirit of that idolatrous age (Leviticus 20:5; cf. Jeremiah 13:27) which eventually led to her marital unfaithfulness (2 Kings 17:10–18; Hosea 4:13).

For the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. The land is mentioned when the people who occupy the land are intended. Just as before with the Canaanites, God would cause the land to vomit out its inhabitants in order to visit upon the land its iniquity (Leviticus 18:19–30; Hosea 2:13; 9:9; Jeremiah 14:10). *Application:* The church can imbibe the spirit of the world and come under the judgment of God (Romans 12:1–2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15).

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. 4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

Gomer means "completion." **Diblaim** signifies a "double cake." The name suits her well in the end as she becomes a woman completely given over to sensuality. However, in the beginning they are

happy and have a child together. Their disparate values do not seem to be any reason to be concerned as they set their course in life.

Call his name Jezreel, which means “God will sow,” or “God will scatter.” This son becomes a sign to Israel that God will judge the nation (cf. Isaiah 8:1–5). God makes a play on the name given referring to Israel throughout the book (1:4, 5, 11; 2:22). There is a judgment that will befall the house of Jehu (Jeroboam II is his grandson, II Kings 10:30); however, the judgment which the prophet announces affects “the kingdom of the house of Israel,” indicating that the entire nation of Israel would be scattered (II Kings 17:20–23).

The blood of Jezreel refers not to Jehu’s execution of the house of Ahab, God ordained that judgment (II Kings 10:30; cf. I Kings 19:17). However, God had also ordained that Jehu and his descendants walk in righteousness (II Kings 10:29–31). While Jehu started out well, he soon was seeking his own ends and interests and not those of Jehovah (II Kings 10:30–31; cf. Jeremiah 50:1ff.). His violence and cruelty begat more and more of the same in his descendants as is evident in the instability of the succeeding years (II Kings 13:1–2; 10–11; 14:23–24; 15:8–9). God was so displeased with them that He allowed Zechariah to remain on the throne for a mere six months (II Kings 15:8, 12). With the overthrow of the house of Jehu the demise of the Northern Kingdom was inevitable. The “blood of Jezreel” should be seen in light of the play of the word. The wickedness that Israel had done in their idolatrous rebellion (2 Kings 17:13–18) had resulted in the shedding of much innocent blood. This is the “blood of Jezreel” or “the blood of scattering.” God hated their sin and because of it removed Israel out of His sight.

5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

It shall come to pass in that day...This refers to the day in which God will scatter or sow Israel. It is the day in which the Kingdom of the house of Israel will cease.

I will break the bow of Israel. To “break the bow” is to destroy the power of a nation (Jeremiah 49:35; Psalms 46:9; 76:1–6; Zechariah 9:10). God promises to destroy the nation of Israel, but he does not renege on His covenant with them through Abraham (Hosea 2:17–20; Isaiah 2:4; 11:6–9; Jeremiah 23:6; Ezekiel 39:9–10; Zechariah 9:10).

In the valley of Jezreel. The valley of Jezreel, also called Megiddo and Esdraelon, was a great valley stretching from the Jordan on the east to Mount Carmel on the west. It was a point of entry from the trans-Jordan used by invaders (Judges 4:7; 5:19; 6:33; I Samuel 29:1; II Kings 23:29–30; Zechariah 12:11), this is where Saul was defeated and died (I Samuel 31:1–3; cf. 29:1); it was the place where Elijah slew the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:40) and Jehu slew the house of Ahab (II Kings 9). Hosea is the first to associate it as a figure for the judgment of God. John will employ it similarly (Revelation 16:16).

6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. The second child of Hosea and Gomer is also named as a sign for the nation.

And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah, which is to say, “not pitied.” It is debated whether or not this second child actually belonged to Hosea (Hosea 2:4–5). Granted the language allows for such an interpretation. In verse three the Holy Spirit is precise saying, “She bare him a son.” However, in verse six, Gomer is said only to have “conceived again.” The name God gives implies that she was illegitimate (cf. Psalms 103:13; Malachi 3:17).

I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel. The prophet is not announcing a rescission of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:1, etc.). However, God is making clear that the terms of the

Mosaic covenant will be enforced (Leviticus 26:28–34; Deuteronomy 28:45–68). Israel will suffer the extreme punitive act of God's wrath in order to effect their repentance (1 Kings 8:1–53). After which, He will return them from captivity (Zechariah 10:5–12).

I will utterly take them away. This name indicated that Israel would no longer receive mercy from God. God's longsuffering was exhausted (II Peter 3:15) and judgment day had arrived (Amos 4:12). They were going into captivity in Assyria (Hosea 9:3; 10:6; cf. Jeremiah 13:14).

7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah. Even though Judah was equally guilty (II Kings 17:19); He did not carry them away captive at this time. God did this because of His promise to David (II Samuel 7:15–16; Psalms 89:27–37; Isaiah 55:1–3). At the time of the removal of Israel, Judah did not have an heir to David through Hezekiah (II Kings 18:1–2; 20:1–6; 21:1–2). God's mercy was in maintaining the House of David and fulfilling the promise made to Abraham (II Kings 19:34; Isaiah 7:13; 9:1–7). He showed mercy for the sake of the remnant (II Kings 19:1–4, 30–31).

[I] will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. This is a prophecy concerning the miraculous deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah (I Kings 18–19; Isaiah 36–37).

8 ¶ Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. 9 Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

Now when she had weaned Loruhamah...The time of weaning being when a child is somewhat self sufficient, that is, not requiring the constant attention of its mother (I Samuel 1:24; Psalms 13:12; Isaiah 28:9). It was regarded as a time for celebration recognizing a significant transition in the life of a child (Genesis 21:8). The weaning of Loruhamah may imply the lust of Gomer, who hardly having weaned the infant was again pregnant by one of her lovers.

Then said God, Call his name Loammi, which means, "not my people." As before, the language of the Holy Spirit leads us to the conclusion that Hosea's wife is playing the harlot against him. She has given him two children by other men.

Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. God rejects Israel as not his own (Hosea 4:6, 10–12; 5:4–6; 6:6; 7:10, 13; 9:1, 15; 11:7; 13:2–4; 14:1); they are the children of an harlot because the nation has left the altar of Jehovah and gone upon the hills to commit whoredom with Baal. In the figure, they are at once the harlot and her offspring. Nationally and generationally, they are Gomer. But, that present generation which had exhausted God's patience was Loruhamah and Loammi.

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered. The words of the prophet are reminiscent of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17–18 and 32:12 (cf. Acts 3:19–26). Hosea is being told that even though God will discipline Israel according to the curses of the Law, He will not forsake His covenant of grace to redeem them in Messiah. Paul quotes this text in Romans 9:25–26 and Peter quotes it in his first epistle at 2:10. In each passage the Holy Spirit indicates that the fulfillment is realized in the Church of Christ. Paul in particular applies the text to Jewish and Gentile believers (9:24)—those who are "of the faith of our father Abraham" (Romans 4:9–13).

It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them..."The place" refers to the land of Canaan. The prophet is indicating that this prophecy of redemption will take place after the

nation is restored to the land (Hosea 1:6; cf. II Chronicles 30:1ff; 31:1–6). They could begin looking for their Messiah after their recovery and return to Israel and not before (cf. Isaiah 7:16). Then, in the same land where their captivity was announced, their redemption would be announced (Luke 24:44; Isaiah 2:1–4; Hosea 9:3, 17; 11:5; 8–11; 14:4–9).

Ye are the sons of the living God...This is the new birth of the Gospel (John 3:1-18), justification by grace through faith in Jesus as the Messiah (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). They would be called the “sons of God” when they believed on Jesus as the Christ (Galatians 3:26–28; I Peter 1:18-25).

11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together...When the Gospel was preached and believed the divided nation would once again be reunited under their “David” (Hosea 3:4–5; cf. Genesis 49:10). This was fulfilled on Pentecost when devout Jews from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5, 9–11) were added to the church (Acts 2:47; cf. vv. 29–33).

And appoint themselves one head... *Suwm* (7760) has a wide range of meanings. It is used three other times by the prophet (2:3, 12; 11:8). It is used to indicate recognition as a king (Deuteronomy 17:14–15; I Samuel 8:1, 5; I Kings 10:9). The redeemed remnant would be re-united under the Lord’s Christ as King of Kings, the head of the Church of Christ (Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4–6; 5:23–27).

They shall come up out of the land, not their literal return from the captivity in Assyria where they had been scattered or sown (1 Kings 14:10–16), but their return from captivity unto sin in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:8; Romans 9:27; 11:5). This would be the “day of Jezreel” (Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Zechariah 10:9; 13:9; Romans 9:26; I Peter 2:10).

For great shall be the day of Jezreel. **Jezreel** means “to scatter” or “to sow”. In verse three it is evident that the “day of Jezreel” was a judgment that resulted in the scattering of Israel among the nations. However, now with their repentance and acceptance of the Messiah that scattering is an occasion of a great harvest or ingathering of the remnant which cannot be numbered for multitude which appropriately took place on Pentecost, the feast of ingathering (Exodus 23:16; 34:22).

HOSEA: Chapter Two

1 ¶ Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

Say ye unto...This is Jehovah speaking to the prophet and others like him and not the prophet speaking to his own children. In demonstration of this note throughout the chapter the series of “I will” statements (particularly 2:14–18). In this figure Jehovah is the faithful husband, the nation is the now unfaithful wife, and individual Jews are either “sons of God” or the “children of whoredom.”

Your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah, God addresses the remnant. Unlike their siblings (1: 6, 9; 2:4), they are Ammi, that is, “*my people,*” and Ruhamah, that is, “*have obtained mercy.*” Jehovah calls upon the few righteous that are left to urge the nation to repent

2 Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; 3 Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband. “Plead” (#7378) signifies a controversy or a debate. God wants the remnant to engage the nation in a controversy designed to rebuke and convict them of their sin. This is the final attempt to turn them back to God in order to avoid their destruction. Israel cannot be Jehovah’s wife so long as she is

joined to her idols (Hosea 4:17; Ezekiel 16:44-46). God is not enlisting the remnant as his counsel against Israel, but as pleaders. She will not listen to her husband (2:5), but perhaps she will hear her children.

She is not my wife. Jehovah is not seeking a divorce (Isaiah 50:1), but a reconciliation rooted in repentance. If Israel will put away her lovers, Jehovah will take her back. However, so long as she is joined to her paramours she cannot be His wife (Ezekiel 16:25). To argue that Jehovah divorced His wife Israel has God in conflict with His own law concerning it (Deuteronomy 24:1). The sense of what is happening can be discerned from Hosea 3:3.

Lest I strip her naked. God does not threaten divorce but further punishment which will make her predicament more serious and perhaps compel her to return. God threatens with the punitive measures that would return her to helplessness (Deuteronomy 28; cf. Ezekiel 16:1–6, 37–39).

4 And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. 5 For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. No man is obligated to the illegitimate children of an unfaithful spouse (John 8:41; Matthew 1:18–19; Deuteronomy 23:2; Judges 11:1–11; Hebrews 12:8).

For she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread...water...wool...flax...oil...drink. That of which God was the provider Israel said Baal provided (Isaiah 1:3; Deuteronomy 28:1–14; cf. Jeremiah 44:17; Ezekiel 16:15–34). It was evil that Israel gave to Baal what was Jehovah's alone (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11), but it was beyond the pale that they should praise their gigolos as benefactors and lavish God's gifts upon them (Hosea 2:8; 8:4; 13:2).

Bread...water...wool...flax...oil...drink... These are the blessings of the Moab covenant (Leviticus 26:1–13; Deuteronomy 7:12–15). As long as they were faithful God gave them this and more in abundance (Deuteronomy 6:10–15). But, when they left to go whoring after other gods, the oil, the wine and the corn were taken away (Leviticus 26:14–39).

6 ¶ Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. 7 And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. 8 For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way... (Micah 7:4; Proverbs 15:19; Isaiah 5:5; Ecclesiastes 10:8; Nahum 3:17; Numbers 22:24; Matthew 21:33). Just as God had promised, He would turn against the children of Israel and take away their blessings and bring upon them the curses (Deuteronomy 28:15–24). They had sworn an oath to this effect before God at Mount Gerizim (Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:12; Joshua 8:33). Metaphorically, the prophet refers to this as a hedge and a wall that prevents the harlot Israel from pursuing her lovers (Hosea 2:4). God will with this curse restrain Israel, and her deaf idols would be unable to aid or comfort her (Habakkuk 2:18; Isaiah 44:9–10; Jeremiah 10:14; Psalms 115:5).

She shall seek them, but shall not find them. When God turns against a people and determines their destruction, they will fall (Lamentations 3:1–19; Amos 1:7, 10, 14). There was to be no relief or help for Israel. She would look and look but none would be found. In her desperation she would design to return to her husband because “then was it better with me than now.” Israel would regret but not repent (Hosea 6:4; cf. Jeremiah 15:6–7). However, some see an allusion to Israel's ultimate repentance when they are recovered under the Messiah (cf. Hosea 2:16–17). Yet, that seems out of place to me in the sequence being described.

My first husband...Jehovah was the first husband, the guide of Israel's youth (cf. Proverbs 2:16–17; Ezekiel 16; Isaiah 54:1–10). She had forsaken him for the gods of the nations. Had Jehovah put Israel away? (cf. 2:2). There is still a desire on God's part to be reconciled. Israel is in the throes of regret and turns to Him in despair. To argue Jehovah has already divorced Israel is to put him in conflict with Deuteronomy 24:4.

For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold...I am not persuaded that the prophet speaks of ignorance, but rather acknowledgement. I believe he plays on the word "know" in the context of the marriage figure (cf. Genesis 4:1). Israel knew who her husband was and she knew what He covenanted to do for her, but she had forsaken Him and therefore did not "know" Him or acknowledge the goodness of His gifts (cf. Hosea 2:16).

Which they prepared for Baal...That which Jehovah had covenanted and prepared for Israel, she—as an adulterous wife—gave to her lovers. Like many an adulteress, she perceived that her lover was better to her than her husband, that a faithless lover who would commit adultery with a faithless wife would somehow do the part of a husband. Baal had never given anything to Israel, he had only taken from her. In the end he will forsake her and leave her to a just judgment at the hands of her husband.

9 Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. 10 And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. 11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. 12 And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. 13 And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.

Now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. Jehovah in bringing judgment upon Israel through plagues, famines, wars and captivity would strip Israel naked uncovering her lewdness. That is, by her ultimate plight the world would see that having forsaken her God, God finally forsook her. He stripped her naked in front of the world as men would throw up the skirts of a harlot over her face as an act of humiliation (Jeremiah 13:2, 26; 22:8–9; Ezekiel 5:13–15; 16:37–39; Nahum 3:5; Lamentations 1:8).

I will also cause all her mirth to cease. Jehovah in judging Israel and destroying her agriculturally would bring to an end all her feasts and festivals (I Kings 12:25–33)—her mirth, the joyous occasions of life would be brought to an end (Jeremiah 7:34; 16:9; Amos 8:10).

And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim. God would judge Israel for the deeds done in the worship of the Baal. Israel will be judged, humiliated and impoverished because of her sins. She would be brought as low as she could go—the metaphorical bottom of the barrel.

Wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me. The imagery is of an adulterous woman dressing up for her lover (Proverbs 7:10; Revelation 17:4). This language calls to mind the behavior of Israel before the golden calf at Sinai (Exodus 32:1–6) and with Moab in the wilderness (Numbers 25:1–3).

14 ¶ Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. 15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. It seems to me that the prophet is invoking the imagery of the Exodus where God first

betrothed Himself to helpless Israel (cf. Ezekiel 16). Just as He had cared for Israel when she was cast off in infancy to die and later when she was of age betrothed Himself to her, now He would take her back to Himself in repentance. This “wilderness” is the captivity into which Israel would go. God would turn them away from their idols and back unto Himself. Israel entered into their “wilderness” in 721 BC and did not return from it until Judah came back from Babylon in 536 BC (Isaiah 10:20; 11:1–11; Zechariah 10:10).

I will speak comfortably unto her. God speaks words of comfort through the prophetic revelation that their captivity is not a hopeless casting away (Psalms 119:76). God will remember His covenant of salvation (Genesis 12, 15, 17, 18, 22, et.al. cf. Romans 9:23–26). The promise of Messiah’s coming is the comfort of Israel (Isaiah 40:1–5; 51:1–23; 61:1–3).

I will give her her vineyards from thence... The vine is a prophetic emblem of blessing and prosperity in the Messianic Kingdom (I Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10). Just as God had given Israel vineyards when they came from Egypt prospering them abundantly (Deuteronomy 6:10–11), so they would inherit the greater blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3–11).

And the valley of Achor for a door of hope... Achor was that place where Israel was “troubled” by the sin of Achan (Joshua 7:1ff). It was at Achor that Israel stoned Achan and removed the guilt of his having taken the accursed thing. Isaiah uses Achor as a symbolic place where the remnant of Israel as the flock of God dwells (Isaiah 65:10; cf. Psalms 23). It was at Achor that the trouble of Israel was put away by repentance and obedient faith (Joshua 7:24–26). Here Hosea uses it to signify the captivity from which they can emerge triumphant if they will forsake the evil of their idolatrous ways. Thus, the valley of trouble, their captivity, is the door of hope, the Messianic salvation, if they are willing to pass through it.

She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. Israel sang the “song of Moses” when they came through the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1ff.). This was a song of deliverance or salvation (cf. Revelation 15:3) because God saved Israel that day (Exodus 14:30). So as Israel had sung when she was delivered from Egypt the remnant would sing upon their return to await their Messiah.

16 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. 17 For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. 18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. 19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. 20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;

And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD... This is the day of the Messiah. It is after their sojourn in the “wilderness” which results in a remnant returning to God. Thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. Israel would no longer worship the Baal or Jehovah in association with the golden calves. “Ishi” means “husband.” This signifies their relationship to Jehovah in the covenant of grace through Christ. “Baali” means “master” and refers to the gods of the land, in particular the Baalim which should never have been upon their lips (Hosea 2:17; Exodus 23:13; Zechariah 13:2).

And in that day will I make a covenant for them. This is the Messianic Kingdom in which the covenant of grace is realized. It is the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 16:60; Hebrews 8:7–13). It will be a covenant that results in peace and prosperity, not a material and temporal peace and prosperity but a spiritual and eternal peace and prosperity (Isaiah 11:1–12:6).

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. God’s marriage covenant with Israel would be

honored when Israel turned from her sins (Isaiah 54:5, Isaiah 62:4–5; Jeremiah 3:14). Those that would be married to God are the remnant who would accept His Messiah. There are numerous allusions to the marriage of the Lamb to penitent Israel (Revelation 12:1–6; 19:7, 9; John 3:28–36; Matthew 22:1–14; 25:1–13; Romans 7:1–3; Ephesians 5:30–32).

In righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies...in faithfulness...These are the attributes of the man justified by grace through faith. Through the love and mercy of God he is made righteous and that according to justice: thus here the prophet foresees the atoning sacrifice of Christ which sacrifice will secure us in an eternal fellowship with God (John 3:15–16, 36).

And thou shalt know the LORD...Jeremiah 31:31–34.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth. 22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. 23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth. This is a figurative allusion to God hearing the cry of the heavens for rain, they having heard the cry of the earth, and it the cry of the corn, wine and oil. However, this is not to be construed literally of any blessings God might shower upon a penitent Israel in a restored land (2:6–13; Haggai 1:6–11; Nehemiah 13:12). Rather, it is the grace of God that will rain down upon a penitent people. It is Jezreel, no longer scatter as in captivity, but sow as in harvest.

I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. This is the sowing and harvest that would result from the Gospel being preached to the whole world (Hosea 14:4–7; cf. Mark 16:15–16; Matthew 28:18–20; Romans 1:16–17; 9:23; I Peter 2:10). The salvation and victory of God's people is assured.

HOSEA: Chapter Three

1 Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD. Whether we answer all the questions that may be raised regarding the extent of Gomer's infidelity or not, the fact of it cannot be denied (Jeremiah 3:20; Hosea 1:2). Hosea is encouraged to rekindle the love of their youth (Song 5:16; Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14), to love Gomer with the same kind of love with which God had loved Israel (Ephesians 5:25–26; cf. Ezekiel 16:59–63).

Toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine... God through this experience endeavors to give Hosea some sense of the pain, the grief and the sorrow He has endured while dealing with faithless Israel expressed in their idolatry (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:19). These "flagons of wine" refer to the feasts of the idols where they drank wine to excess (cf. Hosea 4:11; 7:5; cf. Isaiah 28:7; see: Calvin, Poole, Henry, Clark, Wesley). God's love endures through all our rebellion and sin. His heart is broken by our faithlessness (Hosea 11:8; cf. Genesis 6:6).

2 So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

So I bought her to me...From whom did Hosea purchase Gomer? Was it one of her lovers? Was she being sold for indenture? Is it a metaphorical purchase in view of their extended separation and

proving? I am inclined to believe that Gomer ends up on the auction block (2 Kings 4:1; Nehemiah 5:8; Matthew 18:24–25). While the practice was condemned (Leviticus 25:39–46), it was not unknown among the Jews. It is not difficult to see how a woman could by her prodigality fall into such circumstances.

Fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley...The fifteen shekels is about half the price to be paid for an injured slave (Exodus 21:32). Barley was the cheapest of the grains and generally not desired as a foodstuff (II Kings 7:1, 16, 18). When plentiful, an ephah of barley went for about one and one-half shekels. An homer contained ten ephahs (Ezekiel 45:11). Thus, Hosea had about 23 shekels worth of barley.

3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

Thou shalt abide for me many days...There would be no conjugal relations between them for however long Hosea determined. It seems the prophet is implementing a method for rebuilding trust and proving their love for one another. It is an exercise intended to effect their reconciliation (cf. I Corinthians 7:5; I Timothy 3:10). Gomer must truly forsake her lovers and consecrate herself to her own husband (I Corinthians 7:2–4).

Thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man. Hosea expected her to forsake all others and cleave only unto her husband (Romans 7:1–3). Furthermore, Hosea was not going to send her away by divorcing her (Deuteronomy 24:1–4; Matthew 1:19). While he had every right to be jealous and accuse her (Numbers 5:11–31); he would not. Hosea was insistent that they work it out (Malachi 2:14–16; Proverbs 2:17).

So will I also be for thee. Neither did Hosea intend to inflict the same kind of pain upon Gomer that she had upon him by being faithless to her. What he expected in her he would surely demonstrate in himself. This is the mutual pledge of matrimony: leaving and cleaving for life (Genesis 3:24–25).

4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: 5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. The prophet refers to the accouterments of their idolatrous history. In their captivity God would deprive them of their wicked kings that followed in the steps of Solomon and advance beyond the example of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (Hosea 10:3; I Kings 11:1–9; 12:25–30; 16:26, 31; 22:52; II Kings 3:3; 10:29; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:21; 23:15). They would be deprived of sacrificing to their idols (I Kings 13:1–5; II Kings 23:1–20) or the God of heaven (Hosea 5:6; Jeremiah 50:4–5). And, their idols would be pulled down (II Chronicles 34:7). Every vestige of idolatry would be removed (Judges 17:5; I Samuel 30:7–8; Ezekiel 21:21).

Afterward...in the latter days. Hosea joins the other Messianic prophets in identifying the days of Israel's redemption as "the latter days" (Isaiah 2:2; Joel 2:28–32; Daniel 2:28; Micah 4:1, etc.). According to Daniel's visions we know this will be after the Temple is rebuilt and the restored people undergo a severe persecution. Peter identifies the commencement of "the latter days" with Pentecost (Acts 2:16–17).

The children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king...A penitent remnant will return from the captivity to seek God under their Shepherd-King, the ideal David, the Messiah (II Samuel 7:13, 16; Psalms 89:19–37; Jeremiah 30:9,24; 50:4-5; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:22,24; 38:8,16).

And shall fear the Lord and his goodness... To fear the Lord is to be in awe of Him. The remnant would be awed by the goodness of God toward them through their Messiah (Psalms 31:19; Jeremiah 33:1–11; Isaiah 64:4; I Peter 1:8; II Corinthians 9:14–15; cf. I Corinthians 2:9).

The Prophet	The Nation
Hosea	Jehovah (Hosea 2:16–17)
Gomer	Israel (Hosea 4:12)
Gomer’s Lovers	The Baalim (Hosea 4:13-14)
Jezreel	The Remnant (Hosea 1:11–2:1)
Loruhamah	Children of Whoredom (Hosea 2:4)
Loammi	Children of Whoredom (Hosea 2:5)
Gomer’s Separation	Captivity (Hosea 3:4)

HOSEA: Chapter Four

1 ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

The LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. Jehovah levels an indictment against Israel for her sins. “Controversy” means “a legal contest” or “suit” (*Strong #7379*). The charges (Isaiah 3:13–14; Jeremiah 4:22; 5:4; 25:31; Hosea 12:2; Micah 6:2) which the prophet brings are expressed negatively and affirmatively (cf. Matthew 23:23).

Negatively	Affirmatively
No Truth	Swearing (Exodus 20:7)
No Mercy	Lying (Exodus 20:16)
No Knowledge of God	Killing (Exodus 20:13)
	Stealing (Exodus 20:15)
	Adultery (Exodus 20:14)

In general Israel has abandoned God's truth as revealed in the Law (Hosea 4:6) and fallen into wanton disobedience. The result is sin, against God and against their brethren. They are without the knowledge of God, not just cognitive knowledge but genuine experiential knowledge (cf. Titus 1:16; cf. Hosea 8:1–7).

The prophet specifically charges them with violation of four of the Ten Commandments (the third, the ninth, the sixth, the eighth and the seventh; violation of the tenth commandment is implied in violation of the seventh and eighth). Since the prophet is announcing captivity violation of the fifth commandment is implied (Exodus 20:12). A violation of the first and second commandments has already been established (Hosea 2:13; 13:1).

They break out, and blood toucheth blood... Their sins involve the shedding of blood and require the shedding of blood in order to atone (Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 20:10–12). The land is filled with violence because men have forsaken righteousness (4:14; 6:7–11).

3 Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.4 Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest. 5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish...Through the figure of anthropomorphism the land and its creatures are described as suffering. The prophet is announcing famine and drought as the consequence of Israel's sin (cf. Leviticus 26:14–16; Deuteronomy 28:15; Jeremiah 4:28: 12:4; Zephaniah 1:3).

Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another...They are beyond preaching. God calls the prophets to end their pleading (Genesis 6:3). They have become as those that argue with the priest (Deuteronomy 17:8-13; cf. Leviticus 10:8–11).

Therefore shalt thou fall in the day...Because they disregard God's law both they and their false teachers with them will perish (Deuteronomy 17:12).

I will destroy your mother...God is going to destroy the nation (Hosea 2:2). Gomer, Hosea's wife was the type of the nation and they were Loruhamah, that is, those upon whom God would have no mercy (1:6–9).

6 ¶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. 7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.10 For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...Ignorance was the principle cause for the terrible conditions extant in Israel. This ignorance was willful and encouraged by a self-serving priesthood that profited from the sins of the nation (Isaiah 5:13; Hosea 13:6; Jeremiah 5:31).

Thou hast rejected knowledge. God sent them prophets and priests who taught them the truth (Hosea 6:5; II Kings 18:20ff; I Kings 21; cf. Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4); however, they thrust that truth from themselves rejecting God (Acts 13:46; Romans 1:18–2:5). As a result they became reprobate or worthless (Romans 1:28; Jeremiah 6:27–30; II Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:16). So long as Ephraim was joined to his idols, he was incapable of pleasing God (Hosea 4:17).

I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me. To whom does Hosea refer: the nation or the priests of Israel? It seems to me that the prophet is speaking to the priestly class (cf. Isaiah 5:13). However, this interpretation is somewhat difficult since this class was never authorized to serve as priests (I Kings 12:31; cf. Exodus 30:30) and that of which they were priests was not God but an idol (Exodus 20:4). We must remember that the calf worship of Israel at its inception was intended not to turn Israel away from Jehovah, but Jerusalem (I Kings 12:27). Jeroboam while introducing idolatry did not intend to introduce the Baal or other deities (cf. Exodus 34:4, 8). It was Ahab and Jezebel that brought in the Baal (I Kings 16:31). There remained some knowledge of Jehovah in the northern tribes even during the days of the Baal. After the death of Ahab and Jezebel, there was a turning back toward Jehovah under the Jehu dynasty (II Kings 10:30–21; 13:1–2, 11; 14:23–24; 15:8). This certainly was not the repentance the Lord desired. Nevertheless it was a step back from their former sins. In order to maintain His name in the land God allowed the a form of the calf worship to continue during the captivity (II Kings 17:25–41). Thus, this verse is an indictment of the false priests who professed to be teaching the law of God but for their own personal gain and gratification continued in the error of Jeroboam I which led to the further demoralization of the people. They claimed divine authority, approval and endorsement but had none (Matthew 7:21–23' Luke 6:46).

I will also forget thy children. The priests' children are the metaphorical children of the faithless, harlot wife. As false priests they were the harlot's paramours to whom she gave the corn, the oil and the wine which Jehovah had provided. With her they conceived these children which called "not my people."

As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. The false priests increased through the perpetuation of the calf worship and other idolatries of Israel. Furthermore, the reign of Jeroboam II was a long and relatively prosperous one. Their national and economic success gave the people a false sense of security. This false ministry in the name of Jehovah served only to increase the sins of Israel. Whereas the true priest ate the sin offering which atoned for the sins of the nation (Leviticus 6:26; 10:17); the priests of the golden calves were getting fat on the sins of the people perpetuated in the idolatry at Dan and Bethel (cf. II Peter 2:3; Titus 1:11; Romans 16:18). These priests were no safeguard against Israel's sins since their desire was for what the corrupt system provided to them.

And there shall be, like people, like priest. This is the end result; no people will every rise above their sins when they have a hireling clergy class. They are mutually complicit in the sins of the nation and they will share in the guilt and the punishment (Jeremiah 5:31; Isaiah 24:2; I Timothy 4:3; II Timothy 3:1, 6).

I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. These priests and their illegitimate children of whoredom will reap the rewards of their iniquity. God is going to cut off the sacrifices from the idols and bring their evil ministry to an end.

11 Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart. This is a proverbial statement which summarizes the cumulative effect of these forces in lulling a heart into a false sense of spiritual security. *Whoredom*, of course, refers to their false, idolatrous religion. At times in Israel's history idolatry actually involved fornication as a part of the worship (Exodus 32:6; Numbers 25:1–8). However, I believe the prophet is more concerned with the spiritual and covenantal implications than the moral ones in the immediate context. *Wine* refers to the profligacy and licentious character of the day. Our own time reveals how compromising religion has actually encouraged the use of strong drink, adultery and lascivious conduct (cf. Isaiah 5:11–13; 28:7; 56:12; Amos 6:1–7). Religion that gratifies selfishness and carnal inclinations only makes men worse not better. *New wine* refers to the prosperity of the times (cf. Psalms 104:15; Joel 1:10; 2:24; Nehemiah 10:39; 13:5, 12; Haggai 1:11). This new wine is not intoxicating as it is still in the field and the cluster (Proverbs 3:10; Isaiah 65:8). God had warned Israel when they first entered the land concerning the dangers of prosperity (Deuteronomy 8:11–20). Satan had lulled Israel into a stupor of pride and self-confidence through prosperity and ease. Their religion which began in

accommodation and self-righteousness continued to appeal to the desires of the flesh until the entire nation was mired in sin and fit only for destruction.

12 ¶ My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. 13 They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. 14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them. The folly of the imagery is overwhelming. Israel who had heard the voice of God in the wilderness (Exodus 19–20) and seen his mighty works seeks instruction from dumb and powerless pieces of wood shaped by men and carried about (Isaiah 44:9–20; Jeremiah 2:27; 10:3–16; cf. Hosea 8:5–6). They sought the counsel of the stocks through divination (Isaiah 47:12–14; Ezekiel 21:21; Jeremiah 10:2; Micah 3:6–7). The particular method employed in Israel involved rods (rhabdomancy). These were stripped of bark on one side and cast. The side facing upward determined either a good or evil omen. These rods could also be allowed to fall and the direction in which the rod fell determined the omen.

The spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err. Hosea 5:4 describes this “spirit” as absence of will to submit to God. Their stubborn heart is bolstered by their entrenched ignorance of God. Israel desired what the idolatry allowed and encouraged. Israel caught the spirit of their age and walked in the disobedience thereof (cf. Ephesians 2:2–3).

They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains. Israel followed the customs of the Canaanites and built their altars upon the high places and planted groves to accommodate the fertility rites of the Baal worship. In the worship of the calves Israel worshipped God with an image; when they adopted the Baal they forsook him for another (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 42:8; 48:11).

Your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. In these lascivious rituals their wives and daughters prostituted themselves in the bi-sexual orgies that were integral to the worship of this deity.

For themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall. Adultery and fornication was a sin that was openly practiced and accepted. Is it any wonder th at Hosea experienced what he did with Gomer and that God chose this as a figure of the apostasy of Israel?

15 Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth. 16 For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. 17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone. 18 Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye. 19 The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

Yet let not Judah offend. The prophet warns the Southern Kingdom to not follow the transgression of the North. Judah heeded that admonition for a while (cf. II Kings 18–20).

Come not ye unto Gilgal (circle), once a holy city, resting place of the ark and site of the renewal of the Kingdom; in the days of the prophet a decadent place of idol veneration (cf. Hosea 9:15; 12:11; Amos 4:4; 5:5) **neither go ye up to Bethaven** (house of vanities), which was closely associated with Bethel (house of God) the original site of one of the calves placed by Jeroboam (Hosea 10:5; Joshua 7:12; I Kings 12:29; II Kings 10:29; Amos 3:14; 7:13).

Nor swear the Lord liveth. Either they were swearing falsely (Hosea 10:4) or by taking the Lord's name in vain by associating it with the idols (Hosea 4:2; cf. Jeremiah 4:2; Isaiah 48:1; Ezekiel 20:39; Deuteronomy 6:3; 10:20)

For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer. Israel had chosen to represent God as a "calf" but it is Israel who fits the description. They are a stubborn nation that resists the yoke to the point of backsliding (Jeremiah 3:6–22; 7:24; 8:5; Hosea 11:7; 14:4). **Now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.** Being a backsliding heifer, that is, stubborn, God will drive them out of the fold of Canaan into the wide and wild wilderness of Assyria. The figure presents an interesting contrast between the fat cows of Bashan (Amos 4:1–3) and their stubborn resistance and the timid sheep subsisting on the sparse forage of the treacherous wilderness.

Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone. Again, God commands that no one strive with Israel. Preaching isn't going to do the stubborn heifer any good! The word joined suggests the one flesh union which is made in the sexual act (*Strong* # 2266, cf. I Corinthians 6:16). Israel is infatuated with her paramours and will not leave them (Proverbs 2:17; 30:20; Jeremiah 5:7; Deuteronomy 31:16; Judges 2:17; Hosea 2:13).

Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye. They are drunkards (winos drinking cheap wine; cf. Proverbs 10:26). They are unrepentant, licentious idolaters. Their rulers are corrupt (they love shame; cf. Philippians 3:19) seeking bribes.

The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices. They have sown to the wind and they will reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:17). God's judgment is coming (Hosea 4:16; Jeremiah 51:1). Israel will be disappointed in her paramours in whom she put her confidence (Hosea 4:13–14; cf. 2:8; 3:4; 11:2; 12:11; 13:2; Amos 4:5), or the sacrifices they hypocritically offer to Jehovah (Hosea 6:6; 8:13).

HOSEA: Chapter Five

1 Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. 2 And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all. 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you. Jehovah holds the shepherds of Israel accountable for the direction in which they have led the flock (Hosea 4:9; cf. Jeremiah 5:31; Micah 2:11). God's judgment is upon them as the leaders (Psalms 148:11–14; Deuteronomy 17:14–19; Proverbs 29:2, 4, 12; Jeremiah 21:12; cf. James 3:3).

Because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. These were places of idolatrous worship. Mizpah is where God saved Israel from the Philistines (I Samuel 7:1–12). Tabor was where God delivered Sisera into the hand of Barak (Judges 4). The leaders of Israel had encouraged the people in these wicked works and had become a snare or stumbling block to them (Isaiah 57:14; Ezekiel 14:1–11; Matthew 18:6–9).

And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all. These "revolvers" or apostates (*Strong* #7846) are determined (Hosea 9:9; Isaiah 31:6) to make "slaughter" or "sacrifice," referring to the idol sacrifices, or better "massacre" referring to the effect of the influence of their leadership of the nation: they were snares and they were slaughterers.

I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled. Yet, despite the guilt of the leaders, the nation is not absolved of

following their idolatrous counsel and wicked instruction. They have ignored the reproof of the prophets thinking that God is either unconcerned or unable to punish (Psalms 10:11, 13; 59:7; 94:7–16). But, He knows their wickedness and has made it known unto them (cf. Hebrews 4:12–13).

4 They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD. 5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them. 6 They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. 7 They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.

They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them... Literally, “they will not give” or “their doings will not suffer” them to turn to God. God is speaking about a people hardened in sin and that will not repent (I Timothy 4:2; I Thessalonians 2:11–12). The “spirit of whoredoms,” the desires of the flesh which have possessed their hearts have corrupted them (II Peter 2:10–22).

They have not known the LORD. Not that they were intellectually incapable, or that they never knew Him, or that the knowledge of God was hidden from them. Neither were they predestined to damnation, else why preach repentance? Rather, they were fallen away, apostate. In their sinful conduct they cannot claim to have known God (Matthew 7:7:21–23; cf. 1 John 2:13–14; 3:6–10).

And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them. The “pride of Israel” (Hosea 5:5: 7:10) may refer to Jehovah himself (Amos 8:7) or it may refer to the stubborn pride of the rebellious nation (Amos 6:8; Jeremiah 13:9; Leviticus 26:19). In the context, it is God that testifies (5:2). Thus, having rejected God’s testimony they shall fall (Leviticus 26:13ff.)

They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. Just as Israel had gone out into the wilderness with their flocks and herds when they departed Egypt seeking God (Exodus 12:31–32; 8:1; 9:1); they would again in their time of peril seek God, but this time they will not find Him (II Kings 23:25–27; Isaiah 1:10–20). God will not fellowship the impenitent.

They have dealt treacherously against the LORD... This is a figure for their idolatry. They were adulterers having broken their covenant with God (Hosea 6:7; Malachi 2:11–14; Jeremiah 3:20).

Now shall a month devour them with their portions. A reference to a new moon, figuratively signifying a short time (Zechariah 11:8), after which they and their idol devotions (Isaiah 57:6) would be destroyed in the impending judgment. Judgment is at hand.

8 ¶ Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin. 9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. 10 The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven...The prophet orders that the alarm be sounded (Joel 2:1; Hosea 8:1; Jeremiah 4:5; 6:1; Amos 3:6). These are the stations or outposts along the path of an invading Assyrian army entering Judah from the north. **After thee...** Get up! This is the prophet’s warning to flee. **O Benjamin...** the first territory of Judah to be entered by the Assyrian (Joshua 18:25, 28; Isaiah 10:29).

Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke... There is no hope for Israel. The judgment is certain, their captivity is determined. They are being carried away. They shall be “desolate,” that is, an astonishment (Isaiah 13:9; Jeremiah 4:7).

The princes of Judah were like them...Here is warning to Judah again (Hosea 4:15). God is giving them more space. We know that Hezekiah is having some success with his reforms

Them that remove the bound...The prophet compares the men of Judah to those who move the ancient landmarks of the territorial boundaries (Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17; Proverbs 22:28; 23:10). These boundaries are a metaphor for the Laws of God which determine the limits beyond which no man should go (Proverbs 4:23; Psalms 119:11). The kings of Judah were moving these landmarks. Ahaz was corrupting the worship of God with Syrian altars and heathen abominations (II Kings 16:10–18; II Chronicles 28:3).

I will pour out my wrath upon them like water (Psalms 79:6; 69:24; Jeremiah 10:25).

11 Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. 12 Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. 13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. 14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. The commandment is that of the priests, princes and kings who led them in their idolatrous revolt. Micah styles it as “the commandment of Omri” (Micah 6:16). The sin of Israel is consistently referred to as “walking in the way of Jeroboam” (I Kings 16:2; II Kings 17:21). Jeroboam set the calves up, gave commandment concerning them and the people willingly walked after that commandment (I Kings 12:30).

Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. Utter destruction and consumption of the nation (Proverbs 12:4; Job 13:28; Isaiah 50:9; 51:8; Psalms 39:11).

Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and [Judah] sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. The verse presents a parallelism that is unclear in the standard versions. Most understand that Judah should be inserted as the noun before “sent.” “Jareb” signifies a monarch that meddles in the affairs of inferior powers. This was certainly the case with Assyria and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (II Kings 15:19–20; 16:5–9; II Chronicles 28:16–20). In both instances, it was not a remedy and God’s judgments ensued.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. Jehovah would be a consuming lion that would destroy the house of Israel (Hosea 13:7–8; Psalms 50:22; Lamentations 3:10). No escape.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. Just as Hosea set Gomer in the corner for a time so she could rid her heart and mind of her lovers (Hosea 3:3), so Jehovah was putting Israel into captivity to learn that he alone was God (Ezekiel 6:9–10; 20:43; 36:31; Leviticus 26:40–45; Psalms 46:6–10; 78:34; Jeremiah 29:12–13).

HOSEA: Chapter Six

1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. 3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Come, and let us return unto the LORD. The first three verses of this chapter should be joined to 5:14. This is the prophet's earnest plea for repentance. Despite all that Israel has done there is hope. If they will turn to God, He will not hide His face from them (

For he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. He was the lion that rent them in pieces and the one that smote them (5:14). Afterward, no one came to deliver them, but he will deliver them when they repent (Hosea 2:19–20; cf. Deuteronomy 4:31; I Samuel 12:22; 2 Kings 13:23; Psalms 111:7–9). The prophet speaks of the siege of Samaria and the captivity as having occurred.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. (See special notes on this section in appendix). The prophet speaks of a metaphorical resurrection of Israel as does Ezekiel and others respecting Judah (Ezekiel 37; Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 26:19). This resurrection would occur on the third day. It seems that a definite time is in view. It is a brief time relatively, but it is not a literal three days obviously. Some see first the captivity of Israel, then that of Judah and after that the restoration. That may be putting too fine an edge on it. The prophet is announcing their redemption. Captivity was not a permanent condition. They will be restored. This promise is Messianic in prospect, but it is not an unconditional promise of deliverance and redemption. Those raised are clearly a remnant that lives "in His sight," that is, they are in fellowship with Him. These words are to be contrasted with the above in Hosea 5:6, 15.

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. The prophet is precise in declaring that their participation in the benefits of the covenant is dependent upon their running after God (*Strong #7291*). Israel had chased after her lovers (Hosea 2:7) but now she would pursue her husband (Hosea 2:13–20; cf. Isaiah 51:1; Proverbs 15:9; 21:21). The return to fellowship will be as the rising of the sun and the arrival of the autumnal and spring rain (Job 29:23; Ps 72:6). Their knowledge of God was not merely academic but sincerely practical (Jeremiah 22:6–7; Proverbs 4:8; II Samuel 23:4; Matthew 5:14; Philippians 2:15).

4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. 5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. 6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. 7 But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? This paragraph begins a new exhortation or pleading against Israel and Judah. The prophet for Jehovah laments that they will not repent. "What else could I do?" is the sorrowful conclusion (Isaiah 5:4) There is nothing left but judgment?

For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. As my grandmother would say, "Their repentance lasted about as long as a June frost" (cf. Hosea 13:3). There is a definite contrast between what Israel was and what God wanted them to become expressed in the verses above (Hosea 6:1–3).

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. There is no disputing their guilt. God had convicted them by the prophets, but they are joined to idols (Hosea 4:17). They are not listening to God (4:4). It is not a failure of the word (cf. Hebrews 4:12–13), rather it is the hardness of their hearts. They are crooked and cannot be made straight (Ecclesiastes 1:15; Amos 7:7–8; cf. Isaiah 42:16; 45:1). Their sin and wickedness has been exposed (cf. John 3:17–21).

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. God wanted righteousness in Israel rather than the sacrifices necessitated by sin; He desired fellowship based upon a proper understanding of the divine nature over the atoning blood of whole burnt offerings (Hosea 4:1; Deuteronomy 10:12; Micah 6:6–8). Certainly God required and accepted

the sacrifices which He himself ordained; however, it was not His intent for men to behave in a way that necessitated their institution. Jesus applied this text to the Pharisees of His day (Matthew 9:13; 12:7). They had become mote hunters and turned the Law into a burden which none could bear. Their interpretations of the Law extinguished good works and acts of charity while promoting traditions and inventive, piece meal adherence that violated the Law (Matthew 23). In Matthew 9:13 Jesus' application of the text is powerful. The penitent man whom He calls is classed with those that are demonstrating the righteous character He desires. Thus, it becomes apparent that what the prophet and Jesus rejected was the hypocritical performance of external forms absent of any genuine contrition (Isaiah 1:11, 14; 43:24; Ecclesiastes 5:1; Jeremiah 15:6)

But they like men (that is, like Adam, Genesis 3:11–12; Job 31:33; Romans 5:12) **have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.** The prophet again invokes the marriage covenant figure (Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:15–16). Adam in Eden transgressed the covenant and God cast him out, Israel has transgressed and they are cast out.

8 Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood. 9 And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness. 10 I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled. 11 Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity... in the way by consent... Gilead and Shechem (which means consent) were two of the six cities of refuge located on either side of Jordan (Joshua 20:7–8). These six cities and 42 others belonged to the priests and were scattered throughout the land (cf. Genesis 49:5-7). The Levites forsook these cities when Jeroboam erected the golden calves and cast off the priesthood (II Chronicles 11:14–15). After which they became centers of the idolatrous worship in the divided kingdom (I Kings 12:25; Hosea 12:11).

Them that work iniquity... and is polluted with blood...as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way...The false priests of the golden calves are the priests in view since these are the only priests Israel had (I Kings 12:31–32; 13:33; II Chronicles 13:9). These priests do not literally commit homicide but “murder in the way” by assisting Israel in the wicked rituals that are held in these once holy cities. These cities of refuge originally intended to prevent blood-guiltiness are now the occasion of bringing it upon them (Hosea 4:2; 12:4). The priests who were to stand as judges and prevent blood-guiltiness are the instruments of it occurring (Deuteronomy 19:1–13; Numbers 35:1-34; Joshua 20:1–9).

For they commit lewdness...I have seen an horrible thing...the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled. Herein is the blood-guiltiness of Israel (cf. Leviticus 20:14; Ezekiel 3:18–20). Their “lewdness” is their idolatry (Hosea 2:10) and by this they were defiled (Deuteronomy 24:4).

Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people. Pusey sees this as Messianic. Keil and Delitzsch see it as judgment upon Judah for the same sins as Israel. A judgment under the figure of a harvest is a prominent OT theme (Jeremiah 51:33; Joel 3:13). Jesus uses it in the NT of the final judgment (Matthew 13:30, 39). Hosea 4:15 was a warning against Judah and Hosea 5:5, 10, 12–14 as well as 6:4 were pleadings against a stubborn and rebellious Judah that was following in Ephraim's path. This may be a reference to the captivities that befell Judah at the hands of Syria and Israel during the reign of Ahaz (II Chronicles 28:1–15). Thus, the prophet is urging Judah to yield to God's chastisements and repent before they result in the same destruction.

HOSEA: Chapter Seven

1 When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of

robbers spoileth without. 2 And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

When I would have healed Israel...Ephraim...Samaria. The Northern Kingdom is known by its name, its principle tribe and its capital city (Genesis 48:20; Isaiah 7:9; Ezekiel 37:16; Hosea 13:1; I Kings 16:29; Jeremiah 23:13). This is the only verse in which all three are mentioned together. **When I would have healed Israel...**Exactly when there was hope of healing is uncertain. II Chronicles 28:6–15 indicates they listened to God's prophet Oded briefly. However, Pekah did not turn the people from their former sins; they continued to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat (II Kings 15:27–31). **The iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria.** Thus, it appears that their iniquity was their stubborn refusal to turn away from the golden calves.

They commit falsehood; idolatry (Isaiah 44:20; Hosea 4:12; 7:3; Amos 2:4; Habakkuk 2:18; Jonah 2:8; Jeremiah 8:19; 10:8; 16:19; I Kings 16:26; Deuteronomy 32:21; Acts 14:15).

The thief cometh in and the troop of robbers spoileth without...This seems to refer to the effect of their persistence in idolatry. The inevitable result of a corrupt society and moral decay is the inability to govern or defend the state (Isaiah 3:4–8; Ecclesiastes 10:16; II Chronicles 13:7). Israel was being consumed from within and without. Israel is rotten!

And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Like most men they just do not contemplate that God will bring them into judgment for every wicked deed they have committed (Deuteronomy 32:34–35; Psalms 90:8).

Their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face. They are suffering the temporal and spiritual consequences of their sins (Amos 5:10, 12; 8:7; Psalms 9:16; Proverbs 5:22; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36). God knows and sees and will bring every work into judgment.

3 They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies. 4 They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened. 5 In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners. 6 For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. 7 They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me.

They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies. The leaders rejoice in the wickedness and corruption of the people (Romans 1:32). It is this mutual affinity for sin that keeps them in power and allows oppression and corruption to increase unchecked (Proverbs 14:35; 16:10–13; 17:7; 20:8; 25:5; 28:16; 29:4, 12, 14; 31:8–9; Jeremiah 21:12). It seems Hosea is considering the turmoil of the latter days of the Northern monarchy where intrigue, murder and coup were common (II Kings 15:8–31).

They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened. The princes of Israel are completely given over to idolatry and the attendant corruption. They do not need any encouragement or coaxing. They are committed to their wickedness (II Peter 2:14). The fires of their evil hearts are fully stoked.

In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine. Strong drink and drunkenness were not uncommon among the kings of Israel (I Kings 16:9; Isaiah 28:1, 7; cf. I Kings 20:12; Ecclesiastes 10:17), and while their lack of sobriety contributed to their debauched condition, the prophet has in view the influence of the princes of Israel upon their kings who were selected from their ranks through conspiracy and raised to power by coup and civil war. The sickness of inebriation is a metaphor for the wicked influence of the princes of Israel in making and deposing their kings (Hosea 8:4; I Kings 16:1 ff.; II Kings 15:8–20).

He stretched out his hand with scorners. The King of Israel stretched out his hand with these wicked princes in boasting his rise to power (II Kings 9:13; cf. I Kings 1:25). They scorned the God of Israel and every king they raised up continued in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

For they have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me. The prophet renews the oven figure and again affirms that the people of Israel and her princes are fully stoked to consume any all who would consider doing right or who do not advance their wicked agenda forward. They will not repent! (cf. Isaiah 64:6–7; cf. I Kings 11:36–39).

8 Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. 9 Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. 10 And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people. Balal (*Strong* #1101) meaning to “mix,” or to “knead up” (Leviticus 2:4–5). Israel was mixed up with the nations having compromise the Law and embracing the wicked nations. This hastened their downfall (cf. Exodus 34:12–16; Psalms 106:34–41).

Ephraim is a cake not turned. A cake burnt on one side and unbaked on the other, and so uneatable; this is an image of the worthlessness of Ephraim. The Easterners bake their bread on the ground, covering it with embers (I Kings 19:6; Genesis 18:6; Numbers 11:8), and turning it every ten minutes, to bake it thoroughly without burning it.

Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. Like an old man who has lost his strength without realizing it, so Israel has been weakened through intermarrying and its alliances with the nations (Hosea 7:11; 9:3; 11:11; Isaiah 7:4–8).

And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this. Again, the “pride of Israel” (cf. Hosea 5:5) may refer to Jehovah himself (Amos 8:7) or it may refer to the stubborn pride of the rebellious nation (Amos 6:8; Jeremiah 13:9; Leviticus 26:19). Clearly in the context, it is Jehovah that is testifying (Hosea 7:1). His prophets issuing warnings and the ensuing judgments against them have borne this testimony (Hosea 6:5; 7:1; cf. II Kings 17:13, 18).

11 Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. 12 When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard. The dove is proverbial for being “silly” (*Strong* #6601), that is, easily deceived and ensnared (Hosea 9:8; II Kings 15:19; 17:4; Ezekiel 12:13, cf. Proverbs 7:23; Ecclesiastes 9:12; cf. Proverbs 1:17). Israel was without understanding, thus they were easily deceived by the false prophets because they were ready and willing to be deceived (II Chronicles 18:20–21; Psalms 78:36; Ezekiel 14:9; I Thessalonians 2:12–13). Their intrigues with the nations Assyria and Egypt would result in their destruction. When had Israel heard this in their congregation? They heard when assembled for the reading of the Law in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 28:15; Leviticus 26:14).

13 Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me. 14 And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me. 15 Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. 16 They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me. The fleeing and the transgressing are parallel to one another in the verse. Their transgression was in the Golden Calves and the Baal, the latter being a further departure than the former. Israel was running away from God, going further and further into apostasy (Jonah 2:8). This rebellion would end in only in a lamentable wasting of the nation through violence and oppression in captivity to Assyria. Poole observes: "It is the voice both of menace and lamentation; the prophet at once foretells and bewails their miseries."

Though I have redeemed them...God had redeemed them as a nation out of Egypt (Micah 6:4). Yet they slandered God in their devotion to the calves (Psalms 78:35–38; cf. I Kings 12:28). The modern versions represent the tense as future, "I long to redeem them but they speak lies against me" (NIV). If this is the case the prophet seems to be giving the justification for their captivity.

They have spoken lies against me...they imagine mischief...the rage of their tongue...they rebel against me. These are Israel's wicked responses to the discipline of Jehovah toward His wayward people. They did not acknowledge God in genuine repentance. They honored him with their lips but their hearts were far from him (Isaiah 29:13; Ezekiel 33:31). While paying lip service to Jehovah they set their hearts upon the licentious feasts of their idols. Their princes speak insolent words against Jehovah (cf. I Kings 22:8; II Kings 3:14). The people return to the high places and revel before their idols.

And they have not cried unto me with their heart...They return, but not to the most High (Jeremiah 4:1). All their howling, assembling, weeping and praying was for nothing but the corn, the oil and the new wine. Some refer the return to the Great Passover under Hezekiah which did see some reform but not lasting, at least not sufficient to turn away the evil God purposed against Israel (cf. II Chronicles 30:1–31:1).

Though I have bound and strengthened their arms...This is the language of discipline and chastening. God was being merciful to Israel during these years in order to discipline them and turn them back to Himself (2 Kings 13:1–6, 23; 14:23–27). They did not recognize His mercy nor His providence and continued to seek the calves.

They are like a deceitful bow. It either breaks when drawn or shoots awry when released (Psalms 78:57–58). Israel by the patient discipline of God was brought to the brink of redemption, but their repenting was not real. They were aimed and drawn but missed the target.

Their princes shall fall by the sword for: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt. The calamity would be from the top down. They would enter into captivity demoralized and leaderless. With the mention of Egypt in v. 11, it seems that the literal and not figurative be in view here. This must refer to the failed policies of Hosea which did not accomplish an alliance and resulted in their destruction (II Kings 17:4). The fall of Hosea precipitated by the conspiracy with Egypt humiliated him before his would be defenders and made him an object of their scorn in the courts of Pharaoh. The princes fell by the sword in Palestine and their derision was in Egypt.

HOSEA: Chapter Eight

1 Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. 2 Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. 3 Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him. 4 They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

Set the trumpet to thy mouth. The trumpet announces warning and danger—the approach of an enemy (Numbers 10; Hosea 5:8; Amos 3:6; Joel 2:11; Jeremiah 4:5).

He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. Grammatically, the antecedent would be Jehovah (“*the Most High*”) in 7:16. Jehovah is coming with the swiftness of an eagle in judgment upon the house of the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:49; Jeremiah 4:13; Habakkuk 1:8). Their judgment is on account of their transgressing the covenant (this is the Gomer image, cf. Exodus 19:8; Deuteronomy 29:1).

The house of the Lord...The only other use of this phrase by Hosea is in 9:4. It is consistently used in the OT to refer first to the tabernacle (Exodus 23:19) and then to the Temple (I Kings 3:1). There is no reason to doubt that use here. This judgment includes Judah (8:15; 5:10–12). The Assyrians did come against the Temple (II Kings 18:15) and would have pillaged and perhaps destroyed it were it not for God’s mercy toward Hezekiah and Judah (II Kings 19:14–36).

Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. Here is an example of their hypocrisy (Hosea 5:6, 15; 6:1–4; 7:14). They knew who He was, but they did not “know” him (Hosea 2:5, 7, 13; 5:4; this is more of the Gomer image). They were ignorant of God, they had rejected Him and pursued their lovers (8:9; cf. Titus 1:16).

Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him. The words “the thing that is” are not in the text. Israel has cast off GOOD. According to Pocock, “Either God Himself, who is simply and absolutely good, or such things as are pleasing to God, and therefore good as bringing men near to Him, such as his law, his worship, the performance of their duty to Him, and the observance of his ways and commandments” (cf. Psalms 119:68; Matthew 19:17). Concerning this fact Poole states: “[They cast off] moral good to be done, all virtue and goodness; and the supreme good to be enjoyed, God, true religion and virtue; all cast off for idols, false religion, and debaucheries. Such a nation cannot be my people, nor do they know me.” Consequently, the Assyrians will besiege, destroy and chase into captivity Israel.

They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not. The prophet describes the illegitimacy of the kings of the North. God promised Jeroboam a dynasty of kings like that of David, if he would serve God as David did (I Kings 11:37–38). However, Jeroboam turned aside after his own wisdom and forsook God. The result was civil unrest, violence and immorality. When God says “I knew it not,” He does not refer to something escaping His omniscience, rather it was not His will, it came not into His mind to do what Israel did (Jeremiah 19:5; 32:5).

Of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. Idolatry was the means which these illegitimate kings used to establish and hold their power (I Kings 12:26–33). The “they” that are cut off are the “they” who set up kings, made princes and made idols. This is national guilt resulting in a national penalty.

5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? 6 For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. 7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off. The prophet continues to indict the nation. This was not a sin in which they were unwilling participants. Jeroboam did not force them to go to Dan or Bethel. He allowed those who wanted to even return to Judah. The nation is complicit in their guilt and deserving of the consequences for their sin. The golden calf had forsaken them even as Elijah demonstrated at Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:27). The calves were vanities, lies, no gods (Isaiah 40:12–26; 42:17; 44:9–20; 45:16; Jeremiah 10:3–16; 14:22; 16:19–20).

Mine anger is kindled against them. Justly so, Jehovah says, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isaiah 42:8). The Eagle is about to fly (8:1).

How long will it be ere they attain to innocency? This appears to be a rhetorical question: “Will Israel ever be clear of guilt?” In particular, the profit has in view the sin of idolatry. Will they ever forsake their images and return to Jehovah?

For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. The golden calves were of human origin and human design. They cannot be God (cf. Jeremiah 2:28; 11:12; Habakkuk 2:18–19; Daniel 5:23; II Chronicles 25:15; II Kings 19:18). It is therefore destined to destruction.

For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. It is an undeniable truth: men reap in kind and more than what is sown. Sinners sow widely and pray for a crop failure. Yet they that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (Galatians 6:7–8). They would not profit from their rebellion in idolatry. God had determined that they should lose it all. There would be no wheat, just a violent, destructive hurricane of judgment.

8 Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure. 9 For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers. 10 Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

Israel is swallowed up. The nation has become a prey to be devoured. Israel went from being the dominant power in the region to being a dependent client of Syria, to a third rate nation state seeking a powerful ally to defend it. Once robbed of its wealth, it is ready to be consumed.

Now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure. No one wanted to help Israel. She has become as a broken vessel put to a base use. (cf. Psalms 31:12; Hosea 13:15; Jeremiah 19:11; 22:28; 25:34; 48:38; 51:34). However, they could have been a treasured possession (II Timothy 2:19–21; Matthew 23:25–26).

For they are gone up to Assyria (II Kings 15:19), a wild ass alone by himself. The imagery of the ass is often used to indicate the stubbornness and willfulness of the nation (Proverbs 26:3; Job 11:12; 24:5). It is also used to describe the wantonness of the nation in seeking out their lusts in idolatrous worship (Jeremiah 2:24). Here Israel is described as a wild ass "obstinate, running with swiftness wherever his lust, hunger or thirst draw him, without rule or direction, hardly to be turned aside from his intended course" (Job 39:5–8).

Ephraim hath hired lovers. This is more of the Gomer image (cf. Ezekiel 16:33–34). What a pathetic picture of an old whore who pays her lovers for service.

Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes. God is going to uncover the nakedness of Israel and humiliate her before her paramours (Ezekiel 16:37–40). There will be no one among her lovers to deliver her, and Assyria in whom Israel trusted will be her captor. “The King of princes” is the

Assyrian monarch who ruled over the kings or “princes” of the lesser domains. Israel had paid the tribute but was unable to forestall the inevitable (II Kings 15:19–22).

11 Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin. 12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. 13 They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt. 14 For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin (I Kings 12:30; 13:34; cf. Hosea 12:11), **altars shall be unto him to sin**. God had ordained one altar (Deuteronomy 12:5–6, 13–14). Thus, the altars which Jeroboam erected at Dan and Bethel were themselves sin and became the means to more sin (Hosea 4:13–14; 8:13; 12:11; 13:2). Their departures from God in this one matter led to more and greater departures. It is a fallacy to think that departures in form do not produce departures in character and life (Hosea 6:6).

I have written to him the great things of my law (Deuteronomy 4:6, 8; Psalms 19:1–8; 119:18, 72; 147:19–20), **but they were counted as a strange thing**. Attitudes toward one aspect of God's laws will manifest themselves elsewhere. Israel began by altering geography, the calendar and genealogy (I Kings 12:28–33); they ended by violating all the Commandments, by building altars to Baal and offering their children in sacrifice (II Kings 17:7–17).

They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not. He rejected their offerings because they were not the sacrifices which He desired either in form or character (I Samuel 15:22; Micah 6:7–8; Psalms 34:18; 51:16–19). It was a sham fueled by lust and greed (Hosea 4:8; cf. Jeremiah 5:31).

Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt. Instead of atonement their wicked sacrifices added to the store of their iniquity until God could no longer bear it (cf. Jeremiah 44:1–6; Isaiah 1:11–17). It became a stench in His nostrils and an offense to His eyes (Amos 5:21–22; Proverbs 15:8; 21:27; cf. Isaiah 66:3). Jehovah was sending them into captivity of which Egypt was a type, but Assyria was the location (Hosea 2:15; 9:3, 6; 11:5; 12:9; cf. Deuteronomy 28:36, 68; Isaiah 20:3–5; Zechariah 10:10–11; 14:8–9; Revelation 11:8).

For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof. Hosea continues to warn Judah while announcing judgment upon Israel (cf. Hosea 4:15). The reference is not to God as Creator, but as the one that called them to be His own peculiar possession (Deuteronomy 32:18). They were a nation descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by whose God they were delivered from Egypt to be a nation in fulfillment of the promises and blessing which he gave to them. Having forgotten Him they worshipped other God's. Judah not yet having completely rebelled demonstrated waning faith in trusting in their own strength (Jeremiah 5:17; Micah 5:10–11).

HOSEA: Chapter Nine

1 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor. 2 The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her. 3 They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria. 4 They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD. 5 What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD? 6 For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis

shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor. Why might Israel have reason to rejoice? Perhaps the prophet refers to the buying off of Assyria (II Kings 15:19–20). Maybe they are rejoicing over a good harvest and concluding they have made the right choice in Baal (cf. Hosea 2:8–9, 12). However, this is just the calm before the storm. It is the proverbial “kicking” of the “can.” They cannot escape the consequences of their faithlessness.

The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her. Israel’s crops will fail—there will be no grain and no vintage (Psalms 104:14–15; Joel 1:10; Micah 6:15; Deuteronomy 28:51).

They shall not dwell in the LORD’S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria. They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him. Israel and Judah were stewards of the land of Palestine and could remain so long as they were a holy people (Leviticus 18:25–28; 20:22; Numbers 35:34). Having become as wicked as the Canaanites, if not more so, God was casting them out (I Kings 14:24; Jeremiah 9:19; Ezekiel 36:17; 6:9). In their captivity they would be cut off from their idols (Hosea 3:4) and the sanctuary of their God (Ezekiel 4:13; II Kings 17:6).

Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD. What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD? The bread of mourners is unclean (Deuteronomy 26:14; Numbers 19:11, 13–14). Once in the captivity their crops and herds could never be sanctified by the offering of the first fruits at the temple (Leviticus 23:14; Exodus 22:29). Neither would they be able to observe any of the required feasts (Hosea 2:11; 12:9; cf. Lamentations 1:4; Isaiah 1:13; Numbers 10:10; 15:3; II Chronicles 8:13). Israel would be completely cut off from communion with God in their exile.

For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles. The people are removed from the land and consumed in captivity (Hosea 7:13; 10:14; 12:1; cf. 9:7). Egypt is the great metaphor for their bondage. Memphis the city of pyramids, the royal cemetery, will bury the Israelites. The land will be overgrown with thickets and thorns because of neglect from lying fallow (Isaiah 5:6; 32:13; 34:13). Their homes both great and small will be overgrown and left empty.

7 The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. 8 The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God. 9 They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins. 10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come. Their destruction is a visitation, an official time for reckoning (*Strong* #6485; cf. Numbers 3:32, 36; Isaiah 10:3). It is a recompence, a requital or retribution (*Strong* #7966). Israel is held to account and will receive what is just.

Israel shall know it (Isaiah 9:9–10), **the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.** The false prophets of Israel were denying their fate as revealed by the true prophets (Amos 7:10–17; Hosea 6:5). They did not believe, but they

would soon know through sad experience (Amos 4:12). These false prophets were fools and insane (Lamentations 2:14; Ezekiel 13:3; Micah 3:11) because they should have known they were divining falsely, that the judgments of the true prophets were just and that the nation was guilty of the most grievous of sins. However, they themselves are wicked and evil; their hatred of God blinds them to righteousness and justice. They cannot act in behalf of the nation.

The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God. Most of the old commentators see the watchman as a true prophet (cf. Ezekiel 3:17; 33:2, 6–7) held up in contrast to the false prophets who by their error and lies lay snares for the nation. The more modern translations are not to be preferred over the KJV as they offer nothing that clarifies the text.

Consider the possibility that Hosea speaks of himself as the watchman in opposition to the treatment he has received from his countrymen (Jeremiah 6:17). The “house of his God” refers not to the temple but to Ephraim unto whom he was sent. He was regarded as a fool and a madman by those he rebuked. Their impenitent hearts moved them against Hosea with great hatred and enmity.

They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins. God surely will judge Israel because they are corrupted even with the sin of homosexuality (Judges 19–20; cf. Romans 1:18–31).

I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved. The Lord speaks of himself in the person of a traveler, who unexpectedly in the wilderness finds a vine loaded with grapes. When God first chose Israel they were greatly desired just as one desires those wild grapes and ripe figs in the wilderness (cf. Isaiah 28:4; Micah 7:1). However, they soon corrupted themselves with the vile worship of the Molech (Numbers 25:3; Deuteronomy 4:3; 32:17; Psalms 106:28; Revelation 2:14). Twenty-four thousand died in the plagues that followed (Numbers 25:9; cf. I Corinthians 10:8).

11 As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. 12 Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them! 13 Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer. 14 Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. 15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers. 16 Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. 17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them...but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer. Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts! Ephraim means “fruitfulness” (Genesis 41:52). Once they were the most populous and strongest tribe. Not anymore. The prophet curses Israel with barrenness. Their glory and strength are departed. Whatever offspring Ephraim may have is destined for violence, murder, war and privation (II Kings 17:18; Deuteronomy 28:41, 62; 31:17; Job 27:14). The nation is broken.

Yea, woe also to them when I depart from them. The ungodly in their madness desire God to depart from them (Job 21:14; 22:17; Matthew 8:34). At the last they will know how awful the cost to them when God has departed (Deuteronomy 31:17; I Samuel 28:15,16; 4:21).

Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place... Tyre thought it was secure but God allowed it to be destroyed and carried captive (Joshua 19:29; II Samuel 24:7; Zechariah 9:3; Isaiah 23:1–18; Ezekiel 26:7; 29:18). Ephraim also thought that it was secure.

All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, Gilgal had once been a holy site (Joshua 4:19–24; 5:2–13; I Samuel 11:15; 13:4–15; 15:6–23). But, after the division of the tribes, it was transformed into a center for the veneration of the golden calves (Hosea 4:15; 9:15; 12:11; Amos 4:4; 5:5). God hated what they were doing there.

There I hated them...I will love them no more: all their princes are revolters. This is not the human passions of hatred and love ruled by emotion. Rather, this is God's holy hatred of sin (Malachi 1:13) which requires His just punishment thereof. This may be a renewal of the Gomer figure in suggested by putting the unclean woman out of the house (cf. Deuteronomy 24:1). It is the impenitent apostates that are in view (Hosea 5:2).

Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. The fruitful is become unfruitful (Genesis 49:22; Numbers 1:33-35; Joshua 17:17; Deuteronomy 37:17)..

My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: This does not mean that God is reneging on the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13–14; Psalms 105:9; Luke 1:73). God has not cast Israel off (Romans 11:2; I Kings 19:10, 14, 18). Rather, God is casting them into captivity just as He threatened to do in order to break them of their idolatry.

And they shall be wanderers among the nations. This text sometimes used to establish claims of pre-millennial errors. God will consume the nation but there is hope for a remnant (Amos 5:1–6).

HOSEA: Chapter Ten

1 Israel (is) an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. 2 Their heart is divided: now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images. 3 For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the Lord; what then should a king do to us?

Empty vine. "Luxuriant" in the ASV, as such should bear fruit unto Jehovah, but instead bore fruit unto Baal (cf. 2:8–9). This is the imagery of the choice vine which bears wild grapes (see: Isaiah 5:1–10; Psalm 80:8-19 and Ezekiel 17:1-10).

According to the multitude of his fruit...the bounty of his land. This is a reference to the prosperity of the nation, their increase in harvest (cf. 9:1–2). The gods that Israel worshipped were agricultural fertility gods. Thus, rather than building altars unto Jehovah who blessed them (Deuteronomy 28:1-14), they built altars unto the strange gods. Rather than bowing down before Jehovah, they bowed down unto the images of their gods which they erected (Deuteronomy 5:6-10)

Multitude...increased...goodness...goodly. The number of altars increased in direct proportion to the increase in prosperity and the quality of the image, gold, silver, brass, etc. was in direct proportion to the prosperity that Israel enjoyed.

Their heart is divided, NKJV says in the margin "divided in loyalty." The NIV says "deceitful." The idea is that which is conveyed in 8:2, "My God we know Thee." Israel professed to know Jehovah when it was convenient or helpful, like a lot of "church members" they have religion and need the

church when they are in trouble. Israel loved what the gods afforded and were disloyal to Jehovah (Hosea 2:7; cf. Matthew 6:24, 1 Kings 18:21).

Found faulty, that is held guilty, or as Keil and Delitzsch, “now will they atone.” They are going to pay the consequences of their infidelity toward Jehovah (cf. II Chronicles 36:21).

He shall break down...spoil. Jehovah was going to destroy the places of false worship and the images that were erected there (cf. Amos 3:14).

We have no king. The constant epithet for the kings of Israel was “He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin.” When Jehovah judged Israel breaking down their altars to the gods, it would be apparent that they had no king (Hosea 8:4) because the gods which the kings worshipped were destroyed. Jehovah was their King (I Samuel. 8:5-10; 10:19; 12:12; Judges 8:23) but they rejected Him. Now, God would take away their king and destroy them (Hosea 13:9–11).

What then should a king do for us. Pusey comes nearest the thought on this expression of despair. Recognizing that their kings were impotent because they feared not Jehovah, they despair at having any king, since none could help them. These words are indicative of the impenitent heart of the nation. They are still not ready for their Messiah (cf. Hosea 3:5; 8:4; 13:11).

4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field. 5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof (that) rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. 6 It shall be also carried unto Assyria (for) a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel. 7 (As for) Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

Swearing falsely in making a covenant. They enter into treaties with no intention of being faithful to them (II Kings 17:4; cf. 5:13, 7:11; cf. Ezekiel 17:11-21). The sin involved in this was in taking the Lord’s name in vain (Deuteronomy 5:11; 23:21; Psalms 76:11a; Ecclesiastes 5:4–5; cf. Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12).

Judgment springeth up as hemlock. This is not a reference to the quantity, but the quality of their righteousness. Amos said that they had “turned judgment into wormwood” (Amos 6:12; 5:7) and Habakkuk said, “Judgment went forth perverted” (Habakkuk 1:4). Thus, righteousness and justice in Israel was perverted, even denied, the anarchy and oppression that ensued was a bitter poison running rampant in the nation like the hemlock growing in the languishing fields.

The inhabitants will fear because of the calves. Israel will tremble before God in expectation of the judgment which is about to come upon them because of the perversity to which the calf worship has brought them. The calves were at Bethel, the house of God,” but now they are in Bethaven, “house of vanities” or “nothing.” God has shown their gods to be nothing; they are not worshipping Jehovah.

Shall mourn over it. The people and the priests will mourn because the glory of the calves is departed. Their mourning is tied directly to their impenitence. Rather than mourning over sin and the destruction it has wrought in them (Leviticus. 16:29, 30; Leviticus. 26:35-49), they are mourning because their sinful way has been hedged up (Luke. 6:25; Amos 8:10).

It shall be also carried unto Assyria. There is no doubt as to where Israel is going. This is the second time that Hosea has told them (9:3). However, the calf goes as a present to the Assyrian king. It is taken captive by “the warrior” and humiliated at the head of the procession into the captivity.

Shame or humiliation (Psalms. 44:7; Jeremiah. 48:39) is determined for Israel. Its cause is their disregard for the word of God (Psalms. 119:31). This came upon them because God came to despise them (Psalms. 53:5).

His own counsel, perhaps a reference to 1 Kings 12:28.

Her king is cut off as the foam upon the water, Another of Hosea's graphic word pictures. The swiftness and completeness of the overthrow of the King of Israel is depicted. The image is of the quickly dissipating foam that precedes the waves, or like a tiny splinter of broken branch upon the sea, so shall the king of Israel be overcome by the Assyrians.

8 The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us, O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them. (It is) in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows. And Ephraim (is as) an heifer (that is) taught, (and) loveth to tread out (the corn); but I passed over upon her fair neck; I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, (and) Jacob shall break his clods.

The thorn and the thistle... (Hosea 9:6; Isaiah 32:13; 34:13).

They shall say to the mountain, cover us... This is expressive of the desire that Israel will have to escape the impending judgment which will make "nothing" of Aven. Similar language is used to describe the attitude of Judah (Isaiah 2:10, 19), Jerusalem (Luke 23:30) and those judged by the sixth seal (Revelation 6:16). The prophet's point in each case is that all one will want is to escape God's wrath, there will be no place to hide.

The days of Gibeah... (Judges 19:22–25).

The battle...did not overtake them. The outcome of the sin of Gibeah was severe (Judges 20:47; 21:13-15). However, Benjamin was not utterly cut off. Jehovah let the tribe come back. Thus, it seems that the facts of this event are contrasted with the revelation of 10:15. "In a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut-off." They were not extinguished as a tribe. However, there will be no tribal or national identity left for Israel.

The people, the nations, Assyria (Acts 17:26; Daniel 4:25, 27; Deuteronomy 28:63)

When they shall bind themselves in the two furrows... Ephraim was joined to his idols (4:17). Ephraim had also set up kings (8:4). By these Israel had departed from God and sought the nations. Throughout the book God directs his condemnation against these two and holds the nation responsible for both. Their love of these will be the cause of their ruin. Possibly parallel to Jeremiah 2:13.

Ephraim is as a heifer that is taught. There was no desire in Israel to turn back to God. Like the heifer that has the advantage in threshing (Deuteronomy 25:4) and does not want to go to the field to plow, so Israel did not wish to return to God. However, **I passed over upon her fair neck. I will make Ephraim to ride.** Jehovah would now make Israel come under the yoke to plow, that is, God would deliver them over to their lovers, and Israel would learn the hard lessons of sin.

Judah shall plow. Just as Ephraim has learned to plow, Judah will learn the lessons of her sins.

(And) Jacob shall break his clods. This refers to harrowing the fields, a less rigorous labor which is necessary to the harvest after the seeds are sown. This is a reference to the remnant nation that comes out of the captivity which will obtain the harvest in day of Jezreel (Hosea 1:11; 2:22).

12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for (it is) time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. 13 Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the

multitude of they mighty men. 14 Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle, the mother was dashed in pieces upon (her) children. 15 So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness; in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

Sow...reap... break up, the prophet calls them to repentance. If they will return to righteousness God will show mercy unto them (Ezekiel 18:21-23, 27, 28).

Rain righteousness upon you, the forgiveness of their sins and the restoration of fellowship with God. I do not understand this to be an offer by God to avert the impending judgment. It is parallel to Hosea 3:4–5. The prophet is promising them that they can still hope in the Messiah, if they repent and turn to God.

You have plowed...this is what they had been doing: (1) worshipping idols and (2) trusting in Jeroboam II, the great, great grandson of Jehu. There was no trust in God. Compare to the words of Paul in Galatians 6:1 ff.

Shalman is another name for Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria. His conquest of Samaria was brutal.

So shall Bethel do unto you. Their idol worship, whose seat was at Bethel, would be the reason for their fall. The overthrow is not attributed to Shalman, but to Bethel, that is, the God against whom Israel had sinned.

HOSEA: Chapter Eleven

1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. 2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. 3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. 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. 5 He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. 6 And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. 7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. This is one of the more difficult of the OT prophecies to understand. Many are predictive of specific events and can be readily assigned to the life of the Messiah. However, this text in its context seems to have little to do with the specific events to which it is attached in Matthew's Gospel (2:15). The prophet assigns the call to the time "when Israel was a child." This must refer to the infancy of the nation—not the infancy of Jesus. At that moment God loved Israel (cf. Deuteronomy 7:8; Malachi 1:2) which is a reference to the oath and promise given to Abraham respecting the covenant of redemption (Genesis 15:13–16; 12:1–3; 22:15–18; 21:12; Hebrews 11:18; Romans 9:7). Who is the "son" whom God called out of Egypt? Matthew tells us that it is Jesus, "the Lord" (Matthew 2:15). The Father called the Son out of Egypt when he began fulfilling the Abrahamic promise (cf. Hosea 12:9). Matthew sees the deliverance of the infant from Herod by a sojourn in Egypt as an opportunity to magnify God's eternal purpose and verity respecting His oath. There was nothing that would overthrow the plan of God. Hosea is marking the beginning of Israel's rebellion as being from the beginning of their relationship to Jehovah as a nation (cf. Acts 7:51–53). He called them unto Himself; He took them for His wife (Ezekiel 16:6–14). He continued to call them through the prophets but they hearkened not unto Him (Ezekiel 16:59–63). Some see the nation as "the son" (Exodus 4:22-23). While God certainly calls Israel His son to Pharaoh, it does not change the fact that Matthew says these things of the Lord. If the nation is understood as "the son" it can only be as a type of Christ. That is not without precedent (cf. Galatians 4) but does add complexity. It seems to me that God's faithfulness to His covenant is

the principle concern in this context, understanding the text as Messianic lends weight to that concern.

As they called them, In verse one Jehovah called, now in verse two and again in verse seven, “they” call. God called through Moses and all the subsequent prophets (II Kings 17:13–16; Jeremiah 35:17).

So they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Israel hearkened not to the call of the prophets; they literally “turned their face away” (Jeremiah 2:27). They went in the opposite direction of the prophets’ admonition—they rebelled.

I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. 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. The tenderness, goodness and compassion of Jehovah is demonstrated first in the figure of a father teaching his child to walk (Isaiah 46:3; Deuteronomy 1:31; 32:10–12). Then as a physician who heals them of their diseases. Finally, as a compassionate farmer who unyokes his beasts and feeds them before himself (Leviticus 26:13; Deuteronomy 28:48; Jeremiah 2:20; Psalms 78:25). This language ought to be applied to Israel in their formative stages as a nation when God brought them out of Egypt and bore patiently with them in the wilderness.

He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. Not heeding the call of the prophets but rather listening to their false prophets and evil princes Israel is surely going into Assyrian captivity. Destruction is the inevitable outcome of accepting human wisdom over divine (Hosea 8:13; 9:6).

And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him. The prophet again testifies to their stubbornness (Hosea 4:16; Jeremiah 3:6–23; 8:5).

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. 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. 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. 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. 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.

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? Again, Jehovah expresses His faithfulness to the covenant. He does not want to destroy Israel. Think of the longsuffering of God toward us (II Peter 3:15; cf. Deuteronomy 32:36; Jeremiah 31:20; Hosea 6:4).

How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Admah and Zeboim were two of the five cities of the Plain of Sodom which were destroyed in the events surrounding Genesis 19 (Genesis 19:24–25; cf. Genesis 14:8; Deuteronomy 29:23; Amos 4:11).

Mine heart is turned within me (cf. Lamentations 1:20; Genesis 43:30; I Kings 3:26), **my repentings are kindled together** (Judges 2:18; I Samuel 15:35; II Samuel 24:16; I Chronicles 21:15; Amos 7:3). God repents not of sin (Numbers 23:19; cf. Ezekiel 24:14), but of the “evil” He does in punishing nations and men (Genesis 6:6–7; Exodus 32:14; Jeremiah 26:13; Joel 2:13–14; Jonah 3:10; Amos 7:6). His repenting is a matter of being consistent with His divine nature particularly His justice and mercy (Psalms 106:45). God does not want to destroy but to save.

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 (Malachi 3:6; Exodus 32:14). Even for rebellious Israel there is yet mercy, if they will return to God.

They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. 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. Here is the Messianic hope. The remnant of Israel will be gathered in Christ (Hosea 4:2; 6:7; 7:1, 3, 13; 10:4, 13).

Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit. Yet another denunciation of the faithless wife. While there is hope, there is no hope promised so long as this impenitent condition remains.

But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints. The NIV reads, "And Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful Holy One." There is a basis for this rendering within the book (Hosea 5:5, 10, 14; 8:14; 12:2). If the KJV is correct it is so only in a relative and comparative sense because of the good influence of Hezekiah (II Kings 18:3–6; 23:25). Judah is warned not to offend, but she does and becomes worse than her sisters Samaria and Sodom (Ezekiel 16:51, 55).

HOSEA: Chapter Twelve

1 Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt. 2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. 3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: 4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; 5 Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial. 6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind. Israel is chasing the wind (Ecclesiastes 1:14–15; 2:10–11; Job 15:2). This is a reference back to Hosea 8:7 and the empty vanities of idolatry (cf. Isaiah 41:29) and the alliances made with idolaters (cf. Proverbs 15:14; Isaiah 44:20). The east wind or simoon blows from the desert east of Palestine, which not only does not benefit, but does injury (Genesis 41:6; Ezekiel 19:12; Hosea 13:15; Jonah 4:8; Job 27:21).

He daily increaseth lies and desolation. Israel in promoting idolatry increased lies (see note on 7:1, 3). The consequence of their lies was destruction (Hosea 7:13; 9:6; 10:14). Samaria will be besieged for three years (II Kings 18:9–12).

They do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil (Ezekiel 27:17; Isaiah 57:9) is carried into Egypt. Menahem began the alliance with Assyria (II Kings 15:19). Hoshea sought to get from under it and made an alliance with Egypt (II Kings 17:3–5; cf. Hosea 7:11, 16).

The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah... see note on 11:12.

And will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. It seems that the prophet now includes both Kingdoms as a single nation under the figure of Jacob (Genesis 49:2, 33; I Kings 18:31; Psalms 77:15; 85:1ff; Malachi 3:6).

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God. God reminds them of their common ancestry and their common faith in which they were exalted (Genesis 25:23–26; 27:34; 28:13–15).

Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed (Genesis 32:22-30): **he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel** (Genesis 35:1-15), **and there he spake with us...** When did Jehovah speak with "us" at Bethel? (cf. Psalms 66:6; Hebrews 7:9-10). God spoke to them at Bethel when he spoke to their father Jacob. At Bethel Jacob received the promise of Abraham and Isaac. There the sons of Jacob they put away all their idols (35:2-4). The message is Judah and Israel may yet prevail with God if they will put away their idols.

The LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial (Exodus 3:15). Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, the eternal, immutable God who keepeth covenant forever (Psalms 105:8-10; Deuteronomy 7:9; Nehemiah 1:5; Malachi 3:6).

Therefore turn thou to thy God...Jehovah is still their God, and they are His people (more of the Gomer image from chapter three). God being the faithful God who keeps His word should be all the incentive they need to turn to Him in repentance. Why do we forget that God is faithful? (I Corinthians 1:8-9; 10:13; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Thessalonians 3:3; II Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 2:17; 10:23; 11:11; I Peter 4:19; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 1:5; 3:14; 19:11).

Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually. In order to turn they must "keep" or bring forth evidence of "mercy" and "judgment," this the essence of the Law of which Jesus spoke in the first and second commandments (Mark 12:28-31; Deuteronomy 6:4; Leviticus 19:18; cf. Micah 6:8; Romans 12:8-10). These things will surely lead to eternal life in Christ Jesus (Matthew 7:12; 19:16).

7 He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.8 And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.9 And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. 10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.11 Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields. 12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. 13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. 14 Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress. What God desired and required was not what God found in Ephraim! Rather than justice and mercy, Israel was a cheat and an oppressor (Amos 4:1; 8:5; Micah 2:2; 6:10-11). There may be here a play on the word "merchant" which is the same word as Canaanite (Ezekiel 16:3; Isaiah 23:8, 11). Extortion is a form of oppression especially upon the poor (Proverbs 11:1; Leviticus 25:14; Deuteronomy 23:16; 24:14; Proverbs 22:22; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 7:6-7; Zechariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5).

And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin. In this oppression of the weak, the poor, the widow and the stranger Israel maintained he was just and without sin. Success does not establish justification or credit righteousness. It is in the power of the rich to oppress (cf. Job 29:12-17; 31:16-23; Proverbs 29:7).

And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt (cf. Hosea 11:1) **will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.** Despite Israel's wickedness God still professes confidence that they will be a holy people when He brings them back from captivity (Nehemiah 8:17; Isaiah 43:5-6; Jeremiah 16:14-15; 23:3, 7-8). This is Messianic in its prospect.

I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. This is the hope that the prophets have revealed to Israel. Ahijah the Shilonite, Shemaiah, Iddo, Azariah, Hanani, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Jonah, Joel, and Amos were "the prophets" before Hosea. Jehovah had "hewed" and "slain" them by the righteous judgments

that had gone out of His mouth through the prophets but they would not hearken (Isaiah 30:10; Jeremiah 7:25–26; 25:4; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Daniel 9:6–10). Rather they love the false prophets (Amos 2:11–12; Jeremiah 5:31; 23:13–31). God’s controversy with Jacob was a matter that was well established and their guilt was a matter that could not be defended. Hosea testifies against it once more.

Is there iniquity in Gilead? Surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal. The fate that befell Gilead will surely come to Gilgal (II Kings 15:29; cf. Luke 13:1–5). All their idols are vanities and their devotion to them is iniquity (Hosea 4:15; 6:8; 8:11; 8:15; 10:8). Bringing the argument full circle, therefore, iniquity is vanity, nothing, striving after wind, emptiness. What fools they are!

Yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields. The land is overrun with idols and altars dedicated to them (Hosea 8:11; 10:1, 4). They are like heaps in the furrows, a probable reference to dung (I Kings 14:10) spread in the fields (*Strong* #1530).

And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him. These verses set up a contrast between the nation Israel and their ancient progenitors. They are called upon to remember that godly Jacob fled from Esau into Syria (Genesis 28:10). There in exile God blessed him with wives and children which were the beginnings of the nation. Then, God purposed that Jacob and his sons should enter Egypt where they became a great and numerous people (Deuteronomy 26:5). This nation was led out of bondage by a God sent prophet and preserved alive through the wilderness (Psalms 77:20; Isaiah 63:11–12; Micah 6:4). In their rebellion they are still His. Israel will suffer the consequences of their sins but they are not hopeless or helpless.

HOSEA: Chapter Thirteen

1 When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died. 2 And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. 3 Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney. 4 Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died. The “trembling” to which the prophet refers is a time when Israel possessed a reverential awe of Jehovah (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 33:17; Judges 7:24–25; I Chronicles 12:30; Psalms 60:7; cf. Hosea 12:4; Isaiah 28:1–3). When this tribe revered Jehovah, it was a power for good achieved greatness. However, when they used their leadership to turn the nation aside, first after the calves and then the Baal, they became a caricature of their former selves (Psalms 78:9–11). The fruitful vine died (Romans 7:9; cf. Genesis 2:17). Others see this as referring to their leadership in the division of the Kingdom (I Kings 11:26 (cf. *Strong* #673); 12:16).

And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. Israel’s sins have not abated over all of this time. Their idolatry has multiplied from the golden calves to molten images of silver and carved images (Hosea 2:8; 8:4). All of it is the device of human hands (Colossians 2:23). To kiss the calf was to give the truest expression of adoration. Only the devotee of Jehovah would scruple against it (I Kings 19:18; Job 31:27; cf. Revelation 14:9; 20:4).

Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

The nation will be chased from off their land—gone like the dew and the fog, driven like the chaff and smoke by the wind.

Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me. Jehovah again invokes the Gomer figure. Israel is His by covenant. Their captivity is intended to bring them back to the reality that He alone is God and there is none else beside Him (Exodus 20:2–3).

5 I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. 6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me. 7 Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: 8 I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. Their covenant began in the wilderness at Mount Sinai. It is significant that the prophet uses the word “know.” It was in the wilderness that God provided them with everything they needed (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:10–11; Psalms 78:15, 20; 105:41; 114:8; I Corinthians 10:4).

According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me. Under the metaphor of sheep grazing upon luxuriant pastures. God had provided for them amply; they had more than enough. Having it, they forgot who provided it (Deuteronomy 6:10–12; 8:12–14; 32:13–15).

Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them. Another vicious image of their captivity (cf. Hosea 11:1ff.)

9 O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. 10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? 11 I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath. 12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid. 13 The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children. 14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. 15 Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. 16 Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. The blame for their calamity is laid squarely at the feet of Israel. Just as Gomer could not blame Hosea, neither could Israel blame Jehovah (Matthew 25:41). Still there is hope for a penitent remnant.

I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? And thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? This was always the issue with Israel and Judah (I Samuel 8:7, 19; 10:19; 12:12). Would they submit to Jehovah as their King or trust in the arm of flesh to save (II Chronicles 32:8; 20:17; Jeremiah 17:5; Romans 8:31; 1 John 4:4).

I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath. Not Saul (I Samuel 15:11), probably not Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:10–11), but Hoshea (II Kings 17:4).

The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid. The sins of Israel are stored up (Hosea 9:9; Deuteronomy 32:34–35; Job 21:19; Romans 2:5) until the time of recompense. They should not consider the delay as any assurance that they are righteous or have escaped judgment.

The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children. This is a difficult figure of a breach birth (II Kings 19:3). Israel should not delay to repent and be born anew unto God. While this is difficult and painful to delay is to run the risk of death (Isaiah 66:9). Israel now is the time to be delivered.

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. God will save them and redeem them. This passage is Messianic in that the hope that is offered to them is the redemption offered in their return to God. It is not an offer of to belay their captivity. The only prospect of hope for them is in restoration to God (cf. v. 16). Paul quotes this text and applies it to a bodily resurrection of believers in Christ (I Corinthians 15:54). There is no reason why any should argue against that application as correct. (See: additional notes in appendix.)

Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. The destroying wind of God (Assyria) will come up and spoil all the treasures of Israel (see notes on Hosea 12:1).

Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up. Here is their terrible fate met in the siege and subsequent destruction (Hosea 10:14–15; cf. II Kings 17:5; Amos 1:13).

HOSEA: Chapter Fourteen

1 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. 2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. 3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. This is the prophet's final plea. This exhortation assures Israel (Hosea 5:5; 13:9).

Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: Say unto him... Like the prodigal in Luke 15 these words are to be the conviction of their hearts. They are to take words and *turn to the Lord*, to return or turn again (*Strong #7725*) is to come back in repentance. Jehovah wants them to away from the calves and the Baal and return to Him (Hosea 2:16).

Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. They will say, "Take away our sin," that is, the guilt of sin, forgive us of our sins (Luke 17:3–5; Acts 8:22; Psalms 34:18; 51:17). No longer would they just honor with the lips but would offer the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15; Isaiah 29:13; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 15:8; Mark 7:6).

Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses... Israel will stop trusting in the power of the nations to deliver them from their adversaries. Assyria will not save us (Genesis 10:11, 22; Numbers 24:22, 24; I Chronicles 1:17). Sennacherib offered Judah horses (II Kings 18:23) as an enticement to make an alliance with him (II Kings 18:23). The horse was the war machine of ancient times (Deuteronomy 20:1). The Kings of Israel were specifically forbidden to gather herds of horses for the purpose of making war (Deuteronomy 17:6). To do so was a demonstration of a lack of faith in

Jehovah (Psalms 20:7; Isaiah 2:5–9; 31:1–3; Deuteronomy 11:4; Joshua 11:4–9; I Kings 4:26, 28; 10:28; II Kings 7:6–7; Psalms 33:17).

Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods...Israel's return to God will result in their forsaking their idols. They will learn that an idol is nothing (I Corinthians 8:1–4). They will confess what their covenant required: The Lord our God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4; Micah 4:5; Mark 12:29). This is the first and greatest commandment (Matthew 22:38).

For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. God alone is able to help. He it is that is a defender of the weak and helpless (Psalms 10:14, 18; Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalms 68:5; Isaiah 1:17, 23). Israel would learn not to oppress anymore.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. 5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. 6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. 7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

I will heal their backsliding...Their will is yielded to God. They are no longer rebellious and stubborn (Hosea 4:16; 11:7; Jeremiah 3:22; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7; Psalms 103:3). God heals them of their sins and binds up the wounds of their transgressions.

I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. Here is reconciliation. Israel and Jehovah are reunited as husband and wife in the bliss of their covenant. Penitent Israel will be restored to her loving God and receive at His hand all that He has purposed for her in the Messiah.

I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. This is the day of Jezreel. That which was scattered is sown and a harvest is had. It is not the harvest which Israel had sown for itself—the whirlwind. God has turned that catastrophe into a blessing by grace and mercy received in repentance.

8 Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. 9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? Gomer is home. The names of her lovers are forever removed from her mouth. She calls Hosea, Ishi, "husband."

I have heard him...Either God acknowledging Israel's confession, or Israel, still speaking, acknowledging her husband's headship (cf. Ephesians 5:21ff).

[I] observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. These words are more suitable for Israel. Now restored, she is once again the fruitful vine of Ephraim. Her fruit is that which belongs to God and not the Baal.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein. The prophet's final exhortation, admonition and plea. This is the last word.