
The Prophet Hosea

Hosea Chapter One

Introduction to Hosea

I am only going to give you the details of the Hebrew grammar when it provides important details that cannot be obtained from a reading of the English translation. Hebrew transliterations are in all capital letters. The translations herein are generally from the New American Standard Version of the Bible, with some exceptions. Most of the exceptions occur when I translate the book of Hosea from the original Hebrew.

The baseline for this translation of Hosea was the New American Standard Version of the Bible.

From this baseline I made corrections due to my personal judgment of the grammar and syntax of the Hebrew language. Do not treat this as the infallible Word of God! All translations are obsolete from the moment of their publication, and this one is no exception. I intend it for use with the sermon series which I have produced on this wonderful book, and nothing more. You may copy it for your private use only, and if you intend to reproduce it for broader publication, please ask me first!

In order to fully understand Hosea, it is necessary to place this book in the time in which it was written. Therefore, before we get into the verse by verse treatment of the book we will study several introductory subjects.

The Dispensation of Israel.

The Word in Israel's time. The Word in our time takes on only one form: that of the completed canon of Scripture. However, during the dispensation of Israel, the Word of God was communicated in many ways.

In general, for example, a sacrifice was a graphic, material representation of the reality of God and His relationship with Israel, both corporately and individually.

The sacrifice often served as a simple reminder of the person of God and the importance of doing the right thing.

In this way it served as an exclamation point, as a strong emphasis on the communication of God, and the response of man.

- The Selah of the Psalms and Habakkuk was likely a pause in the music or prophecy so that a sacrifice could be made.
- Selah in the Hebrew meant to be quiet, and it was directed towards the orchestra and choir.

Also, there were sacrifices that taught specific aspects of Israel's relationship with God.

The prophet was also a conduit for the word of God during this dispensation.

And sometimes God revealed Himself through a theophany - a direct revelation of His person. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night are examples of theophanies.

Gradually, too, there was a collection of the written word, so that by the time of Hosea there was a collection of writings that including the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), the Wisdom Literature (Job, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and Proverbs), and perhaps the books of Joshua, the Judges, and Samuel (now broken into two parts).

The Plan of God

Salvation in the Old Testament is a dispensational constant: it comes by faith alone in Christ alone, Genesis 15:6.

The post salvation plan of God in the Old Testament time is based on spiritual growth through the inculcation of the word, so that the individual has great and unshakeable love for God in any life situation, Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

The Corporate vs. the Individual

Individuals still brought glory to God's name during this time. The many Psalms are ample testimony to this fact.

But added to individual testimony is the corporate testimony of the nation of Israel, Genesis 12:2,3.

- This corporate testimony is national, but not necessarily racial. All believers in Jesus Christ of the nation became a part of the corporate testimony.
 - That there were several legitimate Jews who were not in Abraham's line testifies quite effectively to this point. Ruth, Rahab the prostitute, and others had none of Abraham's
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blood. Even David was only of half Jewish blood (a long and detailed study which I hope to add to the topic list).

- It is easy to conclude that most of those in the nation of Israel were racial Jews. But it is important to note that the people of Abraham's race were not the basis for the corporate witness, but rather the nation of Israel, and the foundation for that national corporate witness was the true Jew who was a believer in Jesus Christ regardless of race, Romans 9:6.

Israel in Hosea's Time.

The Israel of Hosea's time had much in the way of prosperity. There was plenty to eat, trade was brisk, although probably not booming, and the Jews of the Northern Kingdom were enjoying a pretty nice standard of living for the time.

Although these standards of living were nowhere near the standard in our United States today, relative to the rest of the world the comparison may be closer than what seems.

The people of Israel had much more than just food on the table; there were many forms of recreation and distraction according to ancient customs. The usual form of distraction was the worship of idols, and Israel was a nation beset with this problem.

There was a great deal of internal corruption.

- There was corruption related to the tolerance of crime and criminals.
- There was corruption related to the tolerance of idolatry and many heinous forms of demon worship.
- There was corruption related to trade.
- There was corruption related to politics and much political intrigue. Assassination was common-place. Politically, there is a quite valid parallel with the United States of the 1960's and 70's.

But the Jews were only going through the motions of the sacrificial system, without really having a relationship with God.

- The sacrifices were to bring knowledge, and the knowledge, love.
- By just going through the motions the Jews were in contravention of the plan of God, and making a mockery of what He had ordained.

Divine discipline was imminent. By the time of the prophet Hosea, in the middle of the eighth century, B.C. (the mid-700's), the final cycles of Divine discipline were quite imminent. This meant that Hosea's ministry was an urgent plea for the return of Israel to the true worship of God under the humble acquiescence to the various systems of truth.

Hosea 1:1

The Word of Yahweh which was unto Hosea the son of Beeri in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, the king of Israel.

This verse identifies three important facts about this book: the Divine nature of its inspiration, the identity of the prophet, and the time in which he preached.

The Divine nature of the inspiration is identified in the phrase, "The Word of Yahweh which was unto Hosea..."

Although Hosea was the human mouthpiece, God was the inspiration of the words that Hosea spoke. This was accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the office of prophet.

Topic: PROPHETS AND PROPHECYING

The prophet is identified as Hosea, the son of Beeri.

Beeri, Hosea's father is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and we do not have any information concerning Hosea's early life.

The time of Hosea's ministry is cross indexed in two ways: by the kings who ruled in Israel during his ministry, and by the kings who ruled in Judah at the same time.

Jeroboam is actually the second king of Israel with that name.

2 Ki 14:23-29, "In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years.

He did evil in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, spoken through his

servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher.

The LORD had seen how bitterly everyone in Israel, whether slave or free, was suffering; there was no one to help them.

And since the LORD had not said he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash.

As for the other events of Jeroboam's reign, all he did, and his military achievements, including how he recovered for Israel both Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Yaudi, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel.

Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. And Zechariah his son succeeded him as king.

- Jeroboam's administrative power brought unparalleled economic prosperity.
- He led Israel in expanding her borders almost to their former status under Solomon.
- He ruled the Northern kingdom of Israel from 793-753 B.C.
- This is the king under whom Hosea began his ministry in the Northern kingdom.
- The prosperity that Jeroboam brought was very fragile, and it depended ultimately upon Israel's relationship with God.
- After the passing of Jeroboam, things went downhill for Israel, as we shall see.

But first let us turn to the events of the Southern kingdom.

Uzziah

Uzziah was a king of the southern kingdom of Judah. He was the co-ruler with his father Amaziah from 791-767, when Amaziah was assassinated. He continued to rule until 750 B.C., when he was stricken with leprosy.

2 Chr 26:16-21, "But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in.

They confronted him and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of

Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God.

Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead.

When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him.

King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house --leprosy, and excluded from the temple of the LORD. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

Uzziah did expand the borders of Judah, and strengthen some of the fortress cities of Judah, but he was religiously evil.

Jotham.

Jotham took over from his father in 750 B.C., and ruled until 732 B.C. He was a man who feared God, and he subdued the uprising of the Ammonites and supervised the building of the high gate of the temple.

Chr 27:3-6, "Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the LORD and did extensive work on the wall at the hill of Ophel.

He built towns in the Judean hills and forts and towers in the wooded areas.

Jotham made war on the king of the Ammonites and conquered them. That year the Ammonites paid him a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand cors of wheat and ten thousand cors of barley. The Ammonites brought him the same amount also in the second and third years.

Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the LORD his God.

Ahaz.

Ahaz ruled Judah from 732 to 715 B.C. He was full of arrogance. Judah lost a lot of territory under his rule, both to the Assyrians, and to the Philistines.

2 Kings 16:2-4, "Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God.

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He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

2 Kings 16:10-16, "Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction.

So Uriah the priest built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it before King Ahaz returned.

When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and presented offerings on it.

He offered up his burnt offering and grain offering, poured out his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offerings on the altar.

The bronze altar that stood before the LORD he brought from the front of the temple--from between the new altar and the temple of the LORD--and put it on the north side of the new altar.

King Ahaz then gave these orders to Uriah the priest: "On the large new altar, offer the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and his grain offering, and the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their grain offering and their drink offering. Sprinkle on the altar all the blood of the burnt offerings and sacrifices. But I will use the bronze altar for seeking guidance.

And Uriah the priest did just as King Ahaz had ordered.

Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was truly a great king. He is noted in three long passages of Scripture: 2 Kings 17-20, Isa 36-39, and 2 Chron 29-32.

His greatness as a king was defined by the greatness of his relationship with God. He had responded to the ministry of Isaiah the prophet, and restored much of Judah's spiritual greatness. He ruled from 716 to about 687 B.C.

Other kings of Israel.

Although Hosea does not mention them, there were several other kings of Israel during Hosea's

time. The reason for the omission is simple. They were such bad men that they were not worth mentioning.

- This fact gives us a little insight into Hosea's personality.
- He refused to acknowledge the really bad kings of Israel.
- He saw the authority and the rule of the king as coming from God, and when men usurped that authority through treachery and assassination, Hosea no longer acknowledged them as true kings of Israel.
- Hosea concentrated on the spiritual realities of the situation, and dismissed the unreality of stolen rule.
- Hosea recognized that assassination was never the solution, and accomplished nothing.
- He recognized that two wrongs never make a right.
- He recognized that assassination could never bring a true ruler to the throne. Only God could accomplish that.

There was Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea. The kingdom fell to the Assyrians under the rule of Hoshea in 722 B.C.

Zechariah was a bad man.

2 Ki 15:8-10, "In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned six months.

He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah. He attacked him in front of the people, assassinated him and succeeded him as king.

Shallum was a bad man.

2 Ki 15:13-14, "Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah, and he reigned in Samaria one month.

Then Menahem son of Gadi went from Tirzah up to Samaria. He attacked Shallum son of Jabesh in Samaria, assassinated him and succeeded him as king.

Menahem was a really bad man.

2 Ki 15:16-20, "At that time Menahem, starting out from Tirzah, attacked Tiphshah and everyone in the city and its vicinity, because they refused to open their gates. He sacked Tiphshah and ripped open all the pregnant women.

In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria ten years.

He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. During his entire reign he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

Then Pul king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver to gain his support and strengthen his own hold on the kingdom.

Menahem exacted this money from Israel. Every wealthy man had to contribute fifty shekels of silver to be given to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria withdrew and stayed in the land no longer.

Pekahiah was a bad man.

2 Ki 15:23-25, "In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two years.

Pekahiah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

One of his chief officers, Pekah son of Remaliah, conspired against him. Taking fifty men of Gilead with him, he assassinated Pekahiah, along with Argob and Arieah, in the citadel of the royal palace at Samaria. So Pekah killed Pekahiah and succeeded him as king.

Pekah was a bad man.

2 Ki 15:27-30, "In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years.

He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria.

Then Hoshea son of Elah conspired against Pekah son of Remaliah. He attacked and

assassinated him, and then succeeded him as king in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah.

Hoshea was the terminal bad man of Israel.

2 Ki 17:1-18, "In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years.

He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him.

Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute.

But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison.

The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years.

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods

and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced.

The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns.

They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree.

At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger.

They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, "You shall not do this.

The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I

delivered to you through my servants the prophets.

But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God.

They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do," and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do.

They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal.

They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence.

The date of Hosea's ministry has one definite terminus - the end, which was the fall of Israel in 722 B.C. The beginning of his ministry can be placed anywhere from 793 B.C. to 767 B.C., with it being more likely towards the later date. In any event, Hosea ministered for at least 40 years in the Northern kingdom of Israel. So the first verse gives us a good review of the situation in the time of Hosea's ministry.

- There was prosperity, but it was fragile.
- There was political chaos in the Northern Kingdom, and eventually it would be destroyed while Hosea was still preaching.
- In the Southern kingdom there was instability and even apostasy, but the destruction of Israel and the ministry of Isaiah combined to bring about a great revival in time to save Judah from the fifth cycle of discipline.

Hosea 1:2

In the beginning Yahweh prophesied by Hosea. And then Yahweh said to Hosea, "Go, take in marriage for yourself an adulterous woman, and children of adultery, for the land has been habitually committing adultery after following Yahweh.

Hebrew Notes

The verse begins with the noun TEH.ILLATH. This defines the time at which the action of the verb occurs. This time is identified as the beginning of Hosea's ministry, probably around 770, B.C.

The subject of the sentence is the proper noun YAHWEH. God is the one who produces the action of the verb.

The verb DIBER is a piel perfect. Piel means that the action is intensified. We often do the same thing in the English by adding the adverb really to a verb. "He was really trying hard." The perfect means that the action is seen as completed, and thus in the past. The verb is translated, "spoke", or perhaps "prophesied".

The word BEHOSHE`A connotes that Hosea was the agent, or intermediate mouthpiece of the prophecy of Yahweh. It is translated, "by Hosea".

This is the end of the first sentence, and it briefly describes the early portion of Hosea's ministry. It is just plain old run of the mill prophecy. Nothing special.

- This phase of Hosea's ministry remains chronologically undefined, but see the notes on verse three, below.
- There is nothing mentioned about this early phase in the rest of the book.

The second phase of Hosea's ministry begins with the waw consecutive, which is attached to the verb WAYO'MER. The subject of the verb is again Yahweh, or God the Father. The waw consecutive denotes a chronological passage of time, from Phase I to Phase II of Hosea's ministry.

It is translated, "And then". The simple active verb (WAYO'MER) describes the voice of God as it communicates to Hosea. This is translated, "Yahweh said." Note the difference between this and the previous verb. This is not intensive, and it is not prophecy. This is communication from Yahweh to Hosea that is not intended for the ears of the rest of the world.

The preposition EL tells us that the target of Yahweh's communication is to follow. (HOSHE`A defines that direct object as Hosea. This is translated, "to Hosea.

The imperative verb LEKH identifies the content of Yahweh's message. This is a command, and it is translated, "Go.

The next verb is also in the imperative. The verb is LEKHA, and it is translated, "take in marriage.

Added to this is the preposition and pronoun QAH., which is translated, "for yourself".

The construct noun E'SHETH defines the one to be taken in marriage. It is translated, "a woman of". That final preposition is the translation of the construct state, which essentially says that there is more to come, and that what comes next belongs in some way to this word.

ZENUIM denotes the kind of woman involved here. The word means fornication, or adultery. In the older translations the very descriptive if slightly inaccurate word 'whoredom' is used. It would normally be translated "adultery", but it is better to add the two previous words together, and translate them, "adulterous woman".

Added to this command is the preposition WAW and noun construct noun combination WEYALDHEY THISNEH. This is translated, "children of adultery".

The conjunction BIY indicates the explanation for God's mysterious command. It is translated, "for".

The subject of the explanation is the definite article and noun HA'ARES. It is translated, "the land", and it includes the entire nation of Israel.

ZANOH THIZNEH is in the infinitive absolute, and it shows the action of the verb as occurring over a duration of time. It is translated, "habitually committing adultery.

ME'AH. AREY YAHWEH connotes the former relationship that Israel had with yahweh. It shows a former state of being, which has now been severed. It is translated, "after following Yahweh".

The Impact of the Verse

The timing of the verse.

This verse indicates that there were two phases to Hosea's ministry. Phase I was defined by normal prophecy. Phase II was defined by something which I will call family experience power prophecy.

The two phases are portrayed as exclusive from one another, so that the end of phase I marked the beginning of phase II. There is no overlap. It is

difficult to fix the exact date of the changeover from phase I to phase II, but there are some clues.

- Phase II was a radical measure, designed to increase the power of Hosea's prophecy.
- This increase could only be due to an increase in corporate cosmic involvement in the nation of Israel.
- We know that this increase became dramatically apparent with the accession of Zechariah to the throne. Chaos would follow.
- Furthermore, verse 1 omits all kings of Israel from Zechariah and forward to the destruction of the nation.
- This omission occurred because of Hosea's attitude towards those kings. He did not consider them legitimate.
- Therefore, let us place a tentative date for the end of phase I and the beginning of phase II at 753 B.C., the date when Zechariah took the throne.

The nature of family experience prophecy.

God commanded Hosea to marry an adulterous woman and to have children of adultery. The experience of marrying an adulterous woman would give Hosea insight into the experience of God with Israel, and as a result it would empower his prophetic teachings.

The family of Hosea was designed to be the moral equivalent of Israel. This insight would enable Hosea to preach more effectively to a nation that was spiritually bankrupt and adulterous in their relationship with God.

Because Israel was spiritually bankrupt it would take a special kind of prophecy in order to communicate effectively to them.

- Hosea became a sort of mediator between God and Israel. He experienced the experience of God, and thus became a more effective communicator.
- God always strives to communicate effectively to man. The very nature of verbal plenary inspiration indicates this.
- In verbal plenary inspiration, God allows man to put His word into their words, through their personality and feelings and language.

- Thus, verbal plenary inspiration is a very effective mode of communication from God to man.

Hosea understood the thoughts and feelings of God quite intimately because of the failings of his own wife and children. So when he observed the failings of Israel, he had great insight on what to say, and how to say it. This gave greater power to the words of his prophecies; greater power by far!

Our lives and ministries may also be empowered by our experiences, insofar as our experiences have been governed by the word of God. When using experience to empower our ministries, great care must be taken to follow this principle: Scripture governs experience, but experience does not govern Scripture.

Effective communication would not equal conversion in the case of Israel; they would reject the grace offer of God and be destroyed. Although this command appears to violate the integrity of God, let us examine the situation more closely.

- The command says what it says. It is clear from the language that Gomer is an adulteress at the time of the marriage.
- Even if she was not an adulteress at the time of the marriage, she would become one, and God foreknew that, so with foreknowledge it is effectively the same thing.
- God's direct will is involved here. He commands Hosea to marry an adulterous woman.
- By the law, adultery is sexual relations with someone other than the one to which you are married.
- God did not command Hosea to commit adultery himself. When Hosea had sexual relations with his wife, it was legitimate sex.
- Marriage to an adulterer does not make you an adulterer.
- Hosea's marriage is to imitate the relationship of Israel with God. Israel was adulterous almost from the beginning of her relationship with God. No sooner than the nation had crossed the Red Sea with Moses, than they became a whining and complaining and fearful mob.

Hosea's wife Gomer was also adulterous from the beginning of that marriage.

From the text it sounds like Gomer became pregnant right away.

This pregnancy came from an adulterous relationship.

The situation in Israel is called to mind.

Hosea 4:13, They sacrifice on the mountaintops and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar and terebinth, where the shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution and your daughters-in-law to adultery.

So, Hosea is commanded to marry an adulteress. Even if Gomer was not an adulteress previous to her marriage to Hosea, in fact, even if she was a virgin, Hosea knew what she would do, and this is not, I repeat, not a violation of the integrity of God.

Marriage to an adulterer is not recommended - do not try this at home.

Hosea 1:3

And so he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim and then she conceived and bore him a son.

The Impact of the Verse

This verse records the birth of the first of Gomer's children. Although this verse says that Gomer bore Hosea a son, the child was conceived in an adulterous relationship.

Hosea 2:4, "I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery."

Although Hosea is not the child's biological father, he would apparently raise him. Remember, Hosea's family experience is designed to empower his prophecy by giving him empathy with God. Hosea's family is designed to imitate Israel in their adultery against God.

The emotional trauma of having an adulterous wife adds extra power to Hosea's prophetic teachings - it makes him much more effective.

This radical measure was necessary for radical times. Israel was in a state of apostasy, and headed for the fifth cycle of discipline in a hurry.

During the time of Hosea's family ministry, Israel was in a state of civil war. Political assassinations were common. Turmoil was great. The people were degenerate.

So, Hosea was to experience what God had experienced. This would make him a great prophet, and a great prophet was sorely needed in Israel.

Hosea 1:4

Then Yahweh said to him, 'Call his name Jezreel, for yet a little while and I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu and I will destroy the dominion of the house of Israel.'

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse is fairly straightforward in its translation. The verse begins the case of God against Israel through the family experience power prophecy of Hosea.

- Hosea had experienced the birth of his first son, Jezreel.
- Gomer became pregnant from an adulterous tryst with another man.
- From the moment of conception that birth became inevitable. The seed of another man was sown inside of Hosea's wife, and there was nothing to be done.
- The pregnancy of Gomer and birth of Jezreel became a great double entendre intended for the nation of Israel.

The seed sown into Gomer is analogous to the adultery of Israel against God. The act would have its consequences.

This adultery is identified fully in the second half of the verse. It is the acts of Jehu which bring these things upon them. Jehu was the king of Israel from 841 to 814 B.C., a full generation before Hosea's time.

2 Ki 10:25-31, As soon as Jehu had finished making the burnt offering, he ordered the guards and officers: "Go in and kill them; let no one escape." So they cut them down with the sword. The guards and officers threw the bodies out and then entered the inner shrine of the temple of Baal.

They brought the sacred stone out of the temple of Baal and burned it.

They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal, and people have used it for a latrine to this day.

So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel.

However, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit--the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

The LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in accomplishing what is right in my eyes and have done to the house of Ahab all I had in mind to do, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.

Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit.

Jehu is probably the greatest hypocrite in the history of Israel. God ordered him to slaughter all those who are engaged in idol worship. He is doing the same thing at the same time - he too is an idol worshipper.

He carries out the order of God, but he refuses to repent of his own sin. He should have had himself killed along with the others! However, his motive is revenge for the death of his 70 sons, who were killed by this same people. He did not care about command of God. He used the command to exact revenge.

Jehu did not get away with anything here. In fact, he planted the seed for the 5th cycle of discipline, which would come to fruit in 722 B.C.

Jehu had continued the sins of Jeroboam I, the first king of the Northern kingdom, who had begun the idol worship at Bethel and Dan so that his subjects would not have to go up to Jerusalem to worship. Not only were these different places for worship, but they worshipped different Gods there. One can hardly construe the worship of a golden calf as worship of Yahweh, when such activity so blatantly violates the commandments of God!

Jehu would say, "I carried out the command of God and destroyed the Baal worshippers and the house of Ahab.

We can imagine God's response as something like this: "You only carried out my command because it was a convenient way to exact revenge, and not because you thought that what they did was wrong. You yourself do these very same things".

Again, the seed was planted under Jehu, and it would come to fruit as every pregnancy will.

Hosea's first son Jezreel represents the certainty of the Divine judgement to come against Israel.

- Jezreel in the Hebrew literally means, "God sows", and in his name is the warning to the nation of Israel.
- The seed of the Divine discipline of Israel is already sown, and it will only be a little while until it comes to fruit.
- At the time of this prophecy, the nation of Assyria was making rumbles to the north, and in just 20 years or so it would come to lay waste to the Northern Kingdom.
- The discipline could be avoided through repentance. God could stop what He had already sown, if He so desired.
- Jezreel is also the name of the place where the 70 sons of Jehu were killed - that is the second half of the double entendre.
- Notice that there was plenty of time for Israel to repent. Before it was all over, there would be more than a hundred years of opportunity for repentance.
- Notice also that Jehu, an evil man, came to throne at the demand of the people of Israel, but did not tell them why he was anointed king,

2 Ki 9:11-13, When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, one of them asked him, "Is everything all right? Why did this madman come to you?" "You know the man and the sort of things he says," Jehu replied.

That's not true!" they said. "Tell us." Jehu said, "Here is what he told me: 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'

They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps.

Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!" So, Hosea got to see first hand what it was like to be on the wrong end of an adulterous marriage, and to experience the anticipation of the coming birth.

This first hand experience gave extra power and insight to his prophecy of the coming discipline of Israel. Hosea preached and preached, and yet Israel would not repent.

Hosea 1:5

And it will be in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

The Meaning of the Verse.

Here comes the prediction of the specifics concerning the fifth cycle of discipline.

The bow of Israel is her military might, and it will be broken in the geographical location which is appropriate for the administration of the discipline.

The valley of Jezreel was situated in the Northern part of the Northern Kingdom. It was the natural route for the Assyrian Army to take in their conquest of Israel.

2 Ki 15:29, "In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria.

- This territory included the valley of Jezreel as the southernmost boundary.
- It was here that the military of Israel was broken in their fight against Assyria.
- Assyria won the fights for all these towns in very lopsided battles.
- Because of these military defeats, Israel signed a peace treaty with Assyria and became her vassal.
- A few years later, the Assyrians under Shalmaneser would come down and destroy the rest of the country.

With the military of might of Israel destroyed, they would have no way of stopping the Assyrians from doing what they pleased.

- This disaster stared them in the face for a few years, and then the other shoe dropped.
- It must have been an agonizing time for this nation. Not yet destroyed, and yet unable to defend herself against a terrible foe.
- Even during this time of helplessness, they did not turn to God and reestablish their relationship with Him.

It is appropriate that the destruction of their military occurred in the valley of Jezreel.

- Because they had sown their sin here in the sins of Jeroboam the first and Jehu.
-

- Because the valley itself was called "God sows", and so Divine discipline was sown there, and reaped there as well.

Hosea 1:6

And she conceived again and bore a daughter, and he said to him, "Call her name 'Lo ruhamah', for I shall certainly not have any more compassion for the house of Israel, and I definitely shall not forgive them.

Hebrew Notes.

The first part of the verse is easy.

The Qal imperfect of the verb HARAH portrays the second conception of Gomer as being identical to the first. Apparently this second conception was the product of an adulterous affair on the part of Gomer.

The Qal imperfect of the verb YALADH shows the second birth is also identical to the first, except that bath indicates that this child was a daughter.

Again the command comes from God to provide a specific name for the child, from the verb QERA', which is the Qal imperative of command.

The name itself is LO-RUH.AMAH, which is translated quite literally, "not compassioned". This daughter was to represent to Hosea the attitude which God had towards the people of the Northern Kingdom. God will explain in the rest of the verse.

The preposition BI points to the explanation of the name of Hosea's daughter.

The negative adverb LO plus the verb 'OMIPH, the adverb `ODH, and the verb 'ARAH.EM are all translated together.

The verb 'OMIPH is the hiphil imperfect. This is the causative verb, and it basically means to add one thing to another. Here it is taken with the next verb to show an action that God will not take, not even in the slightest degree.

The verb 'ARAH.EM is the piel imperfect, which intensifies the verb that is found in its tense. The result of these two verbs together with their adverbs is a very intense, very exact, and very clear statement. It is translated, "I will definitely, positively, absolutely not give one more milligram of compassion.

The direct object of the preceding verbs is 'ETH-BETH YISRA'EL.

'ETH is the sign of the direct object in the Hebrew. They used a separate word to point to the direct object, instead of a case ending.

BETH means "house of", and it is the construct, meaning that it will take the next word in the possessive.

YISRA'EL is the proper noun Israel.

This adds up to the ruling family of Israel and all the lands which they rule.

- As we already know, the nation of Israel is going to be utterly destroyed under the fifth cycle of discipline just a few years hence from this prophecy.
- This phrase indicates that the cause of the discipline is the ruling royal family of that nation.
- However, it also implies that the nation is responsible for its rulers - that the rulers are what the nation deserves. Beware! "I didn't vote for the S.O.B" bumper stickers are useless and more than that, they shirk responsibility. We get the rulers we deserve, and we must take responsibility for them.

The further explanation of the cutting off of God's compassion is pointed to by the explanatory use of the preposition BI.

The reason is stated with the infinitive absolute and verb NASHO' 'EWHA'. The infinitive absolute show emphasis when it precedes the verb, so again we have a very strong statement from God. It is translated, "I shall definitely not forgive".

The direct object LAHEM finishes the verse.

It is translated, "them".

The Meaning of the Verse and Its Impact.

Gomer gave birth to a female child.

- Since Hosea's family was to have great significance in his prophetic life, the sex of his second child would as well.
- The family of Hosea represented Israel. As Hosea's family was to him, so also Israel had been to God.

Hosea's first child, a male, was born from an adulterous tryst on the part of Gomer.

- He represented the hypocrisy and adultery of Israel, and he was a foreshadowing of what

was to come in Divine discipline through the fifth cycle of discipline.

- He represented the rule of Jehu, a king who was idolatrous and unfaithful in his relationship with God.

Likewise, his second, a female, was born from an adulterous tryst on Gomer's part. The female child represents the effeminate nature of the people of Israel.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with having a daughter. Here, she represented something that was wrong with Israel. The men had become like women, and vice-versa.

The men were effeminate because of their immorality - their immoral activities had sapped their strength as men. They were no longer virile nor masculine (not macho).

The name of this daughter is a further indictment in this direction.

The meaning of the name.

Lo-ruhamah, as we have seen, literally means "not compassioned".

This child was the product of adultery, and represented Israel.

- Because Israel had been involved in idolatry for so long, God had finally decided to cut off his compassion towards her.
- There is a time when worldly compassion must be cut off, for the good of those who have received it, and for the good of those around them.
- This does not imply the loss of salvation in any way.
- It does imply loss of priest nation status and logistical grace on a national scale.

RUHAMAH is also a word which finds its roots in the word for "womb", and feminine compassion. This matches well with the idea of the child being a daughter.

Israel had lost her capacity for compassion, and therefore no compassion would be shown to her.

- The women no longer had the quality of femininity and feminine compassion.
- The men no long had the quality of masculinity and masculine compassion.

Therefore, God would cut off His Godly compassion towards them.

- At the time just before Hosea began his ministry, God had this attitude toward Israel

2 Ki 13:23, "But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.

After another 50 years of unfaithfulness, that attitude had changed.

Israel was not engaged in harmless sins. There was child sacrifice and unrestrained violence in the land. They were a hazard to themselves and to others, and they had to be removed.

Therefore, God makes two dogmatic statements concerning Israel. "This is the end of my compassion." "This is the end of my temporal forgiveness.

Hosea 1:7

But I will show compassion to the house of Judah and I will deliver them through Yahweh their God, but I will not deliver them by the bow or sword or strategy, by horses or by chariots.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the piel imperfect verb 'ARAH.EM. The piel verb shows the action as happening with a great deal of intensity. The imperfect tense shows that this action will occur at some time in the future (namely, in 701 B.C.). It is translated, "I will have fantastic compassion".

The direct object of the verb is WE'ETH-BETH YEHUDHAH. This is translated, "on the house of Judah". Again, this indicates the entire nation, which here is the Southern Kingdom.

The verb WEHOSHA`TIM displays the way in which the compassion of God will be shown.

The perfect tense of the verb shows that the action is in the future, but is so sure to happen that it is considered already in existence. The hiphil is the causative verb, and so Yahweh is the cause of the action. This is translated, "And I shall deliver them".

The preposition BI is attached to the proper noun YAHWEH, and so it shows the agent of the delivery, which is God Himself. It is translated, "through Yahweh".

The noun ELOHEHEM is a descriptive noun, and it shows the relationship between the deliverer and those who are delivered. It is translated, "their God". This implies that there is a good relationship between the nation of Judah and Yahweh.

The negative adverb LO and the verb 'OSHI'M indicate the means by which the nation of Judah will not be delivered.

The verb is the hiphil imperfect. This means that the action will not come to pass, that God will not cause or use the following means to save Judah.

It is translated, "but I shall not deliver them.

BEQESHETH WEBIH.EREBH
WEBHEMILH.AMAH form the first three means which are not used.

BEQESHETH is translated, "by the bow".

WEBIH.EREBH is translated, "or by the sword".

WEBHEMILHAMAH is translated, "strategy".

BESUSIM and WEBHEPHARASHIM form the second set of means which are not used to deliver Israel. The first is translated, "by horses". The second is translated, "or by chariots

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse makes a strong contrast with the previous one. While God will cut off his compassion to Israel, He will show it to Judah. At the time in which this was written, both nations were in serious trouble.

- Israel, as we have seen, is heavy into idol worship, and under serious Divine discipline and the threat of the fifth cycle.
- Judah is also into idol worship, and they are also under the same threat.

There will be a difference, however. Under the rulership of Hezekiah and the ministry of Isaiah, the nation of Judah will put a stop to idol worship and return to worshipping God in the prescribed way set down by the Mosaic Law. This will result in God's display of compassion at a very dramatic moment in history.

Although the nation of Israel will not be around for that moment, God is giving them a preview in hopes that they too will see the truth.

The nation of Israel will reject this preview, and continue on their road to destruction.

READ 2 Kings 18 and 19

Hosea 1:8

And Gomer weaned Lo-Ruhamah, and then she conceived and then bore a son.

Hebrew Notes.

There are three verbs in this verse, all are in the qal imperfect, third feminine singular. The qal imperfect displays an action as incomplete; and that is done here to show the drama of the act. It is the equivalent of our historical present in the English. The third feminine singular shows Gomer, Hosea's wife, as the subject of those verbs.

The first verb is WATIGEMOL, which means to wean a child from breast feeding. The object of this verb is LO-RUHAMA, the second child in the family, the daughter.

The second verb is WATAHAR, which means to conceive in the womb.

The third verb is WATELEDH, which means to give birth. The direct object of this verb is BEN, which is translated, "a son.

The impact of the verse.

This verse simply records the conception and birth of Gomer and Hosea's third child, a son. This child, like the two before it, was conceived in an adulterous relationship. It was not Hosea's biological child.

Although Hosea was not the biological father of these children, being the mature believer that he was, he did care for them. It was not the children's fault that their mother was an adulteress. The children would get to make their own choices in life when they became adults..

Hosea 1:9

And God said, 'Call his name, 'Lo-Ammi', for you are not my people, and I shall not be God to you.'

Hebrew Notes.

The verse begins with the qal imperfect third masculine singular verb WAYO'MER. It is literally translated, "and he said"; but the subject, God, has been defined in previous verses, and I inserted it here for the sake of clarity. This verb shows a past action as incomplete, and does so for dramatic reasons.

The qal imperative second masculine singular of the verb QERA' describes the action called for by

the preceding verb. It is translated, "Call his name".

The direct object of QERA' is the noun SHEMO, which has the masculine singular suffix, and receives the action of the verb and is translated, "his name".

The name is LO' `AMMI, which translated literally comes out "not my people".

The explanatory conjunction BI has the second masculine plural ending, and it is translated, "for you".

The verb "to be" is inserted here, as it is implied even though omitted in the original text. "are".

LO' `AMMI is next, and is translated, "not my people".

The conjunction WAW is added on to the next word, and it specifies an attendant condition to the first. It is translated, "and".

The personal pronoun in the first person forms the subject of the second condition, which is the mirror of the first. It is WE'ANOKHI, and it is translated, "I".

The verb and negative adverb LO'-'EHYEH form the action of this second condition. It is the qal imperfect, and it is translated, "shall not be".

Again we must insert something here, and it is the proper noun God.

Finally there is the preposition LAKHEM with the second masculine plural suffix, which is translated, "to you".

The Impact of the Verse.

This message from this child is really an application and expansion of the one from the child previous. The application of the cutting of the compassion is that Israel will no longer be God's holy people, set apart for a special purpose in God's outline of history.

Israel's special relationship with God will be cut off because of their sin and especially their idolatry. As we will see in the next verse, there will be a time when that relationship is restored.

Hosea 1:10

And the number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea which is immeasurable and uncountable. And it will be instead of it

being said to them "not my people", it will be said "sons of the living God.

Hebrew Notes

WEHAYAH is the verb 'to be' in the qal perfect tense. It portrays the action of the verb in the completed state. Since here it is in the form of a prophecy, it takes the English future tense. Because it is the Hebrew perfect, it shows the surety of the fulfillment. It is translated, "will be".

This verb governs the next two verbs in the sentence, so that, although they are in the imperfect, they are also a part of this prophecy.

LO'-YIMMADH is the niph'al imperfect, which is the passive form of the verb. Here, it works more like the English adjective "immeasurable".

In the same way, the verb WELO YIMMAPHER is in the niph'al imperfect, and it is translated like the English adjective, "uncountable".

Again, there is WEHAYAH, which is the prophetic future perfect of the verb to be. This verb will govern the other verbs in the sentence, which, although they are in the imperfect tense, they are also a part of this prophecy.

The verb YE'AMER is the niph'al imperfect of the verb to speak, and it is translated, "its being said".

The verb YE'AMER is repeated, with the same translation as above.

The structure of the sentence looks like this:

And the number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which is:

Immeasurable and

Uncountable.

And it will be instead of it:

Being said of them, "not my people",

It will be said, "sons of the living God".

The Impact of the Verse.

See the comments for verse 1:11.

Hosea 1:11

And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will set for themselves one head. And they will ascend from the earth, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

Hebrew Notes

The verb WENIQBES.U is in the niph'al perfect, and this is the prophetic future perfect. It is translated, "will be gathered".

The qal perfect of the verb WESAMU is translated, "they will set."

The qal perfect of the verb WE`ALU is translated, "they will ascend."

Impact of the verse**The Covenants to Israel.**

God provided the nation of Israel a fantastic collection of grace blessings in the form of covenants. A covenant is based on the attributes of God.

- It finds its motive in the love of God. There is nothing treacherous or deceitful about a covenant.
- A covenant finds its modus operandi in grace. God gives based on his thinking, power, and merit.
- It finds its dependability in faithfulness. The blessings always wait for Israel to appropriate them.
- It finds its timing and organization in order. Everything is arranged by the capabilities of God in eternity past.
- It finds its enactment in the sovereignty of God. God chooses to bless Israel.
- It finds its revelation in the truth of God. God is forthright and clear and honest in His communication of the details of His covenants. He always keeps His Word.

The only thing that Israel is to provide is their acceptance of the very first covenant, which is the spiritual one.

- The spiritual covenant is the relationship with God provision.
- In it, God provides Israel with everything that they need to have a national relationship with Him.

They have the information that they need in order to have a relationship with Him.

They have the power that they need in order to have a relationship with Him.

They have the righteousness that they need in order to have a relationship with Him.

- This relationship with God is the greatest of all the covenants, and it provides the best of the blessings.
- Abraham is an example: until he got his relationship with God on track, he would not receive the remainder of his covenant blessings.

During the age of Israel, only racial Jews receive the blessings of the covenants to Israel.

Individual Gentiles may still fulfill the plan of God for individuals, and they may share in the covenants to Israel by way of blessing by association.

Divine Discipline of Israel

Throughout the history of Israel there was much divine discipline. This discipline was like all other discipline: its purpose was to bring the nation back into its corporate relationship with God.

The motive of God in discipline is not treacherous, but comes from a desire for the very best for the objects of His grace. The discipline is always appropriate, so that it provides the circumstances which are most conducive to repentance. In this the justice of God is involved. The discipline never violates the principle of volition. It is intended to focus the attention of the recipients on the truth, and their options regarding the truth.

The discipline does not come from revenge motivation, but from love motivation. Anthropopathisms such as anger are often used to convey the justice of God related to the discipline, but God does not get angry.

- An anthropopathism is a device which is used to communicate a clearer picture of one or more of the actions of God toward man.
- It attributes a human emotion to God which He does not ever have, so that man might understand an action of God.

The discipline is removed or converted to suffering for blessing if the person or nation responds and returns to their relationship with God.

Israel and Dispensations

There is an Israel past and an Israel future.

Hosea, page 16

The past Israel existed from the first Passover, ca. 1440 B.C. to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The future Israel is the Israel of the tribulation and the millennium.

When Hosea speaks of the restoration of Israel, he looks forward to the millennium, and the rule of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the following interpretations apply to the last two verses:

- The nation of Israel will be reunited with that of Judah.
- Their population will grow by a great amount (a sign of prosperity).
- They will obtain a new name, "the sons of the living God", which will reflect their fantastic relationship with Him, and his activities on their behalf.
- They will have one leader in Jesus Christ, the greatest political leader of all time.
- They will ascend above the earth, which is a reference to the quality of life and excellence in production that Israel will have during the millennium. It will far exceed anything before in human history. It will include brilliance in all areas of life.

This prophecy of the millennium is pertinent to the faithful of Hosea's day. It was imperative for the faithful to understand that they might not see vindication in their own time, but that there would be eternal vindication for them, and that in spite of their being witnesses to the final destruction of their nation, it had no reflection on their spiritual lives.

Hosea Chapter Two

Hosea 2:1

Say to your brothers, "my people", and to your sisters, "she has been shown compassion.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse

The verb "say" is a second person plural Qal imperative of the verb 'AMAR. This means that it is a command from God, addressed to all the people of Israel.

What is important about this information is that it is not just addressed to one person in Hosea, or in Jezreel.

Instead it is addressed to the entire nation of Israel, so that they might say these things to one another.

(The other materials related to these words have been discussed in previous lessons.)

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse begins a discourse that lasts several verses - all the way to the end of chapter two.

The purpose of this discourse is to exhort Israel to return to their relationship with God - to change their mind about their adulterous idolatry - and once again know God through the ritual system.

The verse is addressed to the younger generation of Israelites, and it is an exhortation to get to know God. The older generation was so far gone in degeneracy that God had decided to turn and appeal to their children in a brilliant last-ditch effort to save the nation from itself.

God's first objective was to convert the younger generation, if they would respond.. His second objective was to use the witness of the converted generation to appeal to their parents and elders, and thus bring them back.

There is a lesson in this: the most effective witness often comes from those who are close. Family and friends will be much more effective witnesses than a total stranger. There is a certain amount of trust that you have from a family member that you is not present in other relationships.

Other types of witnessing are not prohibited. In fact they are still encouraged. However, they are not as effective, at least from the human viewpoint. This is the evangelism strategy of God, and it makes perfect sense.

It is interesting to note again the contrast between Israel and her southern counterpart, Judah. The same evangelism strategy was used on the both of them. The people of Israel, both children and parents, would reject it, while with the people of Judah, at least the younger generation would accept it.

Hosea 2:2

Contend with your mother, contend (for she is not my wife and I am not her husband), so that she might put away her harlotry from before her, and her adultery from between her breasts.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The first verb of the verse is RIVU, which means "to contend", or argue with someone. It is the Qal imperative, and it shows the command from God to the children (literally) of Israel. This verb is repeated for emphasis, and it shows the urgent nature of the command.

Next is the Hiphil imperfect of the verb THAMER, which means "to put something away", or to stop a certain pattern of behavior. The Hiphil is the causative tense in the Hebrew, and it shows the witness of the child as causing the repentance of the mother. The imperfect part means that this action has not yet taken place, but it is intended to take place. It is God's purpose for it to.

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse reveals the urgent nature of God's message to the older generation in Israel. The parents have taken the nation to the brink of destruction, because of their destructive behavior, and time is of the essence. Therefore, the children are urged to contend with their parents, so that they might repent before they are destroyed by God.

The word RIVU is used to show the intensity of the action which is to take place. The actual arguing is to be rational - for the gospel is the apex of rationality.

The urgent nature of the message is to be conveyed through the intensity of the rational arguments. This contention is to continue until the end.

This verse also reveals that when there is a split in the marriage, all credibility is lost for the purpose of evangelism.

- In a marital split, there is so much emotional pain that it is very difficult for one to communicate credibly with the other.
- There had been a marital split between God and His people, especially the older generation. Therefore He commanded the younger generation to intervene, so that the split might be healed before it was too late.
- Credibility is a very important issue in the dissemination of the gospel, and God does not ignore it here.

This verse reveals that God always chooses the most effective mode of communication. In this

case, it is contention. This contention, coupled with the divine discipline would be the most effective in communicating the gospel to the people of Israel.

In our witnessing life, we too are always to communicate in the most effective manner. However, this is not necessarily always contention.

- There is witnessing by casual conversation which leads to Christ.
- There is witnessing by introducing a good gospel tract.
- There is witnessing by use of Bible verses.

This passage in fact shows that contention is pretty much a last-ditch measure, due to the desperate nature of the times.

Notice that part of the message is the restoration message. It is the message to the prodigal son - the message of grace and forgiveness.

- The one who repents must be confident of his status if he should choose to return.
- If he is not confident, then it is unlikely that he will accept the offer.
- God's offer is always the most gracious, and the one in which we can have the most confidence. He always keeps His word and supplies what He offers.
- Since this is so, if we reject it, then the penalty becomes quite harsh.

So, the situation has become quite desperate, and God goes for broke

Hosea 2:3

Lest I strip her naked and set her as the day of her being born, and I make her as the wilderness and as a parched land, and I kill her with thirst.

Hebrew Notes.

The first verb is the Hiphil causative of PASHAT, which means to cause someone to be stripped of their clothing. It also has the interesting connotation of flaying the skin from one's back in the process of whipping, and the double entendre exists in this verse. It is in the imperfect tense, and so is not a current reality. The adjective 'ARUMM.AH completes the thought, and it denotes the state of nakedness which results from

the stripping. It comes from the Hebrew word for skin, and so supports the double entendre.

The second verb is the hiphil causative of the verb YAS.AN, and it means to cause something to change its state of being. It is a very forceful and vivid verb. It is in the perfect tense, so as to show the certain nature of the event, should the nation of Israel fail to repent. The state to which Israel will be changed is also vividly portrayed by the niphil passive infinitive construct of the verb YALADH. This construction shows an action at the dramatic moment of its occurrence, it is a revelation of an act in progress.

Next is the Qal perfect of the verb SUM, which is the softer version of YAS.AN. It also shows a change in a state of being, and the perfect tense makes this a prophetic future perfect. The state is defined by the noun MIDHBAR, which denotes an uninhabited wilderness.

- The change of verbs also indicates a change from the personal (the older generation of Israelites) to the national.
- The land of the nation of Israel will suddenly be uninhabited, due to death and deportation.

The second part of the national discipline is further explained by the Qal perfect of SHITH, which also means "to make", and is a synonym of SUM. This time the nation is said to be made into an ERES.S.IYAH, a parched land. This shows that not only is the land uninhabited, but it is also uninhabitable. There is no water to found, and no one can live there, even if they were crazy enough to want to do so.

The third part is the natural result of the first two, which is death by thirst. This is portrayed by the hiphil perfect causative of the verb MUTH, which means "to die". When you cause someone to die, you kill them. Notice that this is not the Hebrew verb for murder, which is RASAH. God is righteous, and He does not ever kill unjustly. We have seen the justice of God in His future compassion for all the victims of the heinous crimes of this nation. The method of destruction is S.AM.A', which means "thirst".

- Future compassion is an important concept for those who study Divine discipline.
- When it is necessary God brings final discipline on a person or nation.

- God does this to protect the future victims of crime and violence.
- It is more important for God to have compassion on future victims of criminals than on the criminal himself.
- This is a very important principle to apply in the administration of justice, for we have delegated authority from God to bring justice against criminals. It is superior moral thinking to have more compassion for victims than for criminals!

The Impact of the Verse.

The purpose of this verse is to reveal what would be prevented by the evangelization of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. That is the meaning of the word 'lest'.

Remember, God has put together an excellent evangelization strategy for the nation of Israel.

- Presently, only a few of the children, the younger generation, are believers who are with the plan of God.
- God calls upon these younger ones to evangelize each other, so that they might band together and begin to have some legitimate impact through their weight in numbers.
- After the first stage is accomplished, the younger generation is to turn and evangelize the older generation, thus accomplishing the repentance and salvation (literally) of the nation.
- The younger generation is to actively contend with the older in the area of evangelization, because the situation has indeed become desperate, and the final discipline is near.

This verse is divided into two halves. The first half is personal, while the second half is national. The first half has to do with people, while second half has to do with the nation and even the land itself.

The design of this verse is to wake up the younger generation, so at least they might understand the serious nature of the plight of their nation.

- It is always the burden of the believer to know the truth.
- Although it is good to know the truth, sometimes it is also sad. That is the case here.

The double entendre of the stripping/flaying of the person is especially appropriate, since it

portrays a state of being, and the reality of that state.

- The state of being is nakedness - total, abject poverty and helplessness as a new born babe. Not only will the people be impoverished, but they will be completely helpless to do anything at all about it.
- The reality behind the state of being is that it is divine discipline. God is doing this to wake them up - and to destroy them for what they have done - and to save the innocent victims of their heinous acts.

So the discipline on the people will be poverty. That is the personal nature of the discipline. Next is the national discipline.

First, the land will be uninhabited. This will be due to the conquest of the Assyrians.

- Many thousands of the inhabitants of Israel will be killed by the Assyrian invasion.
- Many thousands more will be deported back to Assyria, where they will become slaves.
- The land will become as one big ghost town - deserted for all intents and purposes.

Furthermore, the land will become uninhabitable. A famine will strike, leaving it a parched desert, unarable and unbearable. Without water, the land will die of thirst. The ecosystems of Israel will be destroyed, and no man can survive there.

This must have been a shocking thing to consider, when a person of that time looked at their fertile land. Indeed the plain of Sharon was one of the great garden spots of the ancient world, and the caravans of the time used to go out of their way to travel through this strip of land that extended through the nation from North to South for some 90 or a hundred miles.

It would be like going through California in the Springtime, and finding it to be one big desert. What a terrible shock that would be.

In summary, this verse is a warning to the younger generation, reminding them of what will befall their nation, should they fail to give the gospel.

Hosea 2:4

And I will definitely not have compassion on her sons, for they are sons of harlotry.

Hebrew Notes.

The verse begins with the verb 'ARAH.EM, which is negated by the negative adverb LO. This verb is the piel intensive, which shows the action as occurring in a very intense fashion. The direct object of the verb is BANEYAH, which is "sons", and it points to the younger generation in the nation of Israel.

The conjunction KI points to the explanation for the preceding action.

The final phrase describes them as "sons of harlotry". The word harlotry comes from the noun NUNIM, which means "to commit fornication". A cruder term would be "bastards".

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse takes a different turn, and reverses the course of discipline back on to the younger generation.

Remember that even the younger generation had major problems. They too followed in the footsteps of their parents, and went the way of fornication and adultery.

It is a tendency for any younger generation, that when their parents are spiritually and morally bankrupt, they will fall into the same pattern. Usually there is a different trend, a different twist in the pattern of their unhappiness, but they remain just that - unhappy, and heavily involved in the cosmic system.

The term 'sons of harlotry' connotes not only their genetic trend, but also their actual activity. They are the children of their parents both genetically and actively.

Each generation in the four generation curse must volitionally grab hold of their parents' trends and commit idolatry in order for God to extend His discipline. That is what is noted here.

Only a few of the younger ones were in the plan of God at this time.

Principle: God preserves the righteous in a time of national disaster, because he is always just.

1. Perhaps it will be their time to receive the ultimate blessing of dying grace.
2. Perhaps it will be their time on the witness stand, and the national disaster will be a great test and time of closeness to God.

3. Perhaps it will be their time of great blessing, and the national disaster will break around their lives like the waves on a seawall.
4. Perhaps it will be their time to escape, and live on in spiritual prosperity in another country.
5. Whatever the case, God is always just.

Remember again the principle of future compassion.

Hosea 2:5

For their mother has committed adultery, and the one who conceived them has acted shamefully, for she said, 'let me chase after my lovers, the givers of my food and my waters, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drinks.'

Hebrew Notes

The Hebrew verb for adultery, ZANTHAH, is used in its basic dictionary form to describe the acts of the older generation in Israel. These acts are seen as irrevocably written into the record of the past.

The hiphil perfect causative of the verb BOSH shows the parallel explanation of the act. The shameful activities are synonymous with adultery (which they should have known, but were shameless).

The explanation of her shamelessness (and the shamelessness of the older generation of Israel) comes from her words (which are representative of the words of the older generation). The Qal perfect of the verb AMAR, which means "to speak", introduces her quotation. This is a representative quotation, of what she (Gomer and the older generation) said on various occasions and in various ways.

Next is what is really the key verb in the verse, which is the Qal imperfect cohortative of HALAQ, which means "to go", and more specifically in this context, "to chase". The word is often used to describe the folly of the idolater in chasing after his false Gods. Notice the imperfect tense, which shows the incomplete nature of the action. She chases, but she does not catch. The reason for her failure is found in the following verses. It is God... and more.

The motivation for the chase is given in the final phrase, which includes the Qal active participle NOTHNE, which means "to give". She chases after

her lovers, because they provide her with the things that she desires - food and water, clothing, oil (perhaps for sacrifice, anointing, or food preparation), and drinks.

The final noun, SHIQQUYA is quite revealing, since it shows another category of drink from water. Since this category is placed into the context of logistical necessity, and water is already mentioned, it is likely that alcohol is in view. That the drink is considered a necessity of life, means that addiction is in view here.

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse shows the root causes of the problems.

The surface cause is adultery. The older generation habitually commits adultery, and the younger generation is not far behind.

It is good to understand that there is more than one layer to their problems.

The women commit adultery simply to get something from their lovers. It is just a means to an end.

They commit adultery to get the essentials of life - ultimately to feel secure.

They commit adultery to get more than the essentials - the substance of their addiction.

This recalls to mind the prostitutes in our country, who trade sex in order to get a constant supply of cocaine, or whatever drug might be the source of their addiction.

Much of the pornography business is based on the supply of drugs to the participants, who will engage in any shameless act, and even on film, in order to supply themselves with drugs.

This shamelessness, this overt form of sin is a sign of total degeneracy in the nation.

And yet, as we will see, God is still willing to give them one more chance to repent. He still wants the very best for them, and his grace offer remains.

Hosea 2:6

Therefore behold me, the one hedging up your way with thorns. And I shall wall up her wall, and she will not find her paths.

Hebrew Notes.

The first word is the participle SAQ, which means "to build a hedge". A hedge can be used in one of

two ways: to protect someone from something, as in a hedge around your estate keeps the unwanted out. It can also be used to obstruct, as in a hedge maze. That is the case here. God is hedging up the way of the adulteress.

The specific kind of hedge is delineated by the noun SIRIM, which means "thorns". It is interesting to note that you can penetrate a hedge, but if it is thorny it is going to be painful to do so. That is the picture here. The way to the adulterous liaisons is blocked by a thorny hedge. To go through that hedge is possible, but it will be painful, and she will not emerge unscathed.

Next is the Qal perfect verb NADAR, which means "to build a wall". The object which is said to be walled up is the wall which belongs to the adulterous woman. The home in ancient Israel usually had a walled courtyard, and the courtyard was a very popular place to hang out. The wall would have doors and windows for access. This verb tells us that the woman will be shut up or trapped in her house, and unable to travel about to her liaisons.

The final verb is lo THIMS.A'. It is the Qal imperfect, and it is negated by the adverb LO. It is the verb which means to find. What is searched for, but not found, is the path of adultery. The woman will have the desire for adultery, so that she can get the things for her idol worship. However, God will prevent her doing so by placing roadblocks in her way.

The Meaning of the Verse.

This verse is all about Divine intervention into the area of sin.

There are two levels of sin in the life of the adulterous woman.

1. The first level is the level of adultery; what she does so that she can participate in her idolatry. This is just a means to an end.
2. The second level is the level of idolatry, and this is what she really lives for, and it is definitely worse than the first level.

This adulterous woman represents the older generation in the nation of Israel - she is one, but she represents many.

It is the aim of God to gain their attention - AND, this is the aim of divine discipline (chastisement). Its sole aim is to gain the attention of its object.

- The absolute best way to gain someone's attention is through suffering.
- God uses suffering to gain our attention, so that we will look to Him for answers.

The specific kind of suffering in this verse is frustration suffering.

- The woman is being prevented from engaging in her adulterous liaisons.
- Remember, the liaisons are the means to an end, and if she doesn't give sexual favors, she won't receive what she needs to participate in her precious idolatry.
- Therefore, she is frustrated, and the intent is that she will turn her attention to God.

There are two levels of frustration suffering here.

1. The first level is the hedge level - a hedge of thorns is placed in her way.
 - This is something that is painful to pass through -whether emotionally or physically, and thus it makes the adultery not worth it.
 - In the case of adultery it may be a change in circumstances which leads to her being unable to do the same thing at the same time - perhaps she must go to great ends to meet her lovers now.
 - It could be venereal disease - which makes intercourse painful or embarrassing.
2. The second level is the wall level - where the activity is completely prevented.
 - This level of frustration suffering makes it impossible for the adulterous woman to engage in her liaisons.
 - In turn, she cannot engage in her idolatry, which is what she really wants in life.
 - Nothing seems to work out for this woman, or this generation.
 - This is even worse than the first level, and its design is to focus her attention on God.

Additionally, there is a general frustration about life. This frustration comes from having no direction; from having nothing seem to work out in life; from always seeming to make the wrong decisions; from never getting what she really wants.

This, too is made to focus attention on God

Hosea 2:7

And she will ardently pursue her lovers but she will not reach them. And she will fervently seek them, but she shall not find. And she will say, "Let me leave and return to my first man; it was better for me than now."

Hebrew Notes.

First is the verb, RIDPHAH, which is a piel intensive perfect. It portrays the pursuit of something which is not good or constructive to one's life. It is intensive by nature, and so it shows the relentless pursuit of one addicted to idolatry who is frustrated in gaining the means for that activity. It shows endless running and pursuit.

The participle 'AHEBH is the direct object of the verb, above. It too is in the piel stem, and so it shows the former intensity of her adulterous activity. There was a lot of it, it occurred often, and with many different people.

The hiphil causative of NASAQ and the negative adverb indicates the failure of her pursuit. She intends to reach them, but she does not. She tries and tries to get over that wall, or through that thorny hedge, but she does not.

There is a repetition of thought with the verb BAQISH, which means "to seek". It is in the piel stem, and so the idea of intensity is again conveyed.

The result is again frustration. She does not find them. This is a repetition of the word MAS.A', which was in the previous verse.

The intended result is next. The following is God's intent for the adulterous woman.

1. The intent begins with the Qal perfect of the verb AMAR, which means "to speak" - the woman is going to say something.
2. First, she says "let me leave". This is the Qal imperfect cohortative verb 'ELKHAH, which makes an entreaty for the intended action. Notice that this reveals the true desire of the woman, based on her frustration.
3. Second is also the Qal imperfect cohortative, this time of the verb 'ASHUBHAH, which means to return. It is God's intent that her true desire be for her first husband.
4. Third is the comparison of her previous life with the one she has now.

She says BI TOBH HARI'SHON, ME'ATAH: far better the first than now.

This is a simple clause of comparison, and suddenly, in the frustration which God has brought upon her, the adulterous woman becomes nostalgic about her first husband.

However, this is God's intent.

The Meaning of the Verse.

This verse shows the purpose of God's divine discipline - a change of heart.

It is His intent that the woman should repent and return to her first husband.

It is His intent that she realize how truly great it was with him, and so return.

Only by frustrating her ways can He make her wake up and pay attention to Him.

Again, the woman represents the nation of Israel, the first husband their one and only true God, while the second husband is the idols which they worship.

Review of chapter two. So far we have had:

1. God's evangelism strategy for the nation of Israel, which stands on the brink of destruction.
2. What will occur if the strategy is rejected by the people - destruction of the nation, both young and old.
3. The reason for the destruction, which is their problem with adultery and idolatry.
4. God's discipline strategy for the nation, which means roadblocking the adultery and thus frustrating the idolatry.
5. The intent of the discipline, which is repentance and return to Hi.

Hosea 2:8

And she knew not that I gave the grain and the first wine and the fresh oil to her, and that I multiplied the silver and also gold they made for Baal.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The first verb of this verse is the qal perfect of Yadh`ah. The perfect tense denotes an action in the past which is now complete. It means to know someone or something intimately, and it is

negated by the adverb LO. Therefore, this is translated, "She knew not".

The verb NATHATI is also a qal perfect, and it is identical in form and syntax to the previous one. It means to give, and in this context to give a present, or grace gift to someone. It represents the grace covenants which were provided by God to Israel.

God gave her two three things, all of which were used in idol worship.

The new wine is of particular interest, because wine in the ancient world came in two classes.

- The first wine of the year was made from grapes, and it was always the very best.
- After that, the wine was made from various other fruits, but never again wine. Therefore, the wine in this passage was the very best vintage.

The third verb is HIRBETHI, which is the hiphil perfect. The hiphil stem shows the cause behind the action of the verb, and so God causes the multiplication of the precious metals to the adulterous woman.

Notice that God does not use the verb for giving here.

This multiplication is a verb which denotes much profit and prosperity. The money she makes is measured by multiplication, not addition.

The fourth verb is `ASU, which means to make something. It is the qal perfect, and it shows that whenever they received blessing from God, they made it into an idol, or a part of their idol worship.

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse shows the irony of the whole situation with the adulterous woman, and it also presents the central and most important issue.

The irony is this: The woman goes to her adulterous lovers because they give to her all of things that she needs for her idol worship. She doesn't really love them, she just makes love with them so that they will give her the stuff.

The woman lives for idol worship. She gathers all of those fine things so that she gain engage in her relationship with the false gods.

This means that there are two levels of adultery in this passage.

1. The adultery of the woman, Gomer from her husband.
2. The adultery of the woman from her relationship with God.

These two levels of adultery apply both to Gomer and to the older generation of Israel.

This verse tells us that this woman could have had all of those great things, and a relationship with God, too.

- The things that she had were a part of the covenant blessings from God. She did not need to chase her lovers in order to get the oil and grain and flax and wool and wine and silver and gold.
- God gave her the very things that she chased after, and she used them to try to have a relationship with a piece of wood.

Again, the key verse of this book raises its head. "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.

1. The relationship covenant was the spiritual code of the Mosaic Law.
2. The spiritual code defined a portfolio of ritual which was designed to reveal various aspects of His character and His desire for a relationship with the nation of Israel.
3. There is no relationship without knowledge. In Israel this knowledge was provided through the ritual.
4. The priests performed the ritual. The tabernacle was the place of the ritual, and revealed things in and of itself. The prophets interpreted the ritual.

The woman was getting the covenant blessings and going to the rituals of her idolatry and using them there. Her blasphemy was total.

Remember that God had placed obstacles in the woman's way so that she could not commit adultery.

Incredibly, she found that she still had the things with which she performed her idolatry.

This was designed to remind her of the presence of another God. The living and true God.

Whenever God disciplines us it is to get our eyes back on Him. The discipline is designed to take

our eyes from whatever idol we might worship and remember Him and His grace offer.

1. The discipline is for our own good. It is designed to bring the very best thing in the world to us: a relationship with God.
2. Knowing God is truly the greatest blessing of all; it brings sense and order and good things to your life.
3. Knowing God gives you confidence about the future for both time and eternity.
4. Knowing God gives you the ability to communicate effectively to Him and to others.
5. Knowing God gives you the ability to have great relationships in life through virtue love.
6. Knowing God sets you forth to a great destiny.
7. Knowing God gives you the ability to enjoy the material things of life.
8. Knowing God gives you the ability to be content no matter what your circumstances might be.

Divine discipline places a roadblock in your way to make you stop and think about God. There are two types of roadblock: The hedge, and the wall.

The hedge you can go through, though it may be painful.

The wall you cannot, and it causes you even more pain through frustration.

In the case of roadblock discipline, the blessings remain.

Divine discipline will also remove the original blessings in a second, more severe phase.

Finally there is the sin unto death, which is the point of no return.

The next verses have to do with removal discipline and after that there will be final discipline.

Remember, God's motivation is love.

Hosea 2:9

Therefore I shall turn and I shall take my grain in its time, and my new wine in its season, and I shall snatch away my wool and my flax to cover her nakedness.

The Meaning of the Verse and Hebrew Notes.

The adverb LAKHEN shows us that God is switching to a new phase of discipline. It is translated "therefore".

The qal imperfect verb 'ASHUBH shows a possible future action of God. This possibility is governed by the volition of the woman/older generation of Israel. If they respond to the first phase of the discipline, then this phase will not be implemented. This is why this verb is imperfect: the action is not complete. The meaning of this verb is to change course or turn in one's way. When it applies to a person, it means to change one's mind, or repent. We will translate it "I shall turn".

The result of God's change of mind is portrayed in the verb LAQAH>ETI. The stem of this verb is the qal, and the tense is the perfect. The perfect tense is used to show that once God's mind is changed, this action will certainly occur. Perhaps it is best to call this the provisional prophetic future perfect. The irony of the passage continues with the meaning of this verb, because it is often used in the context of marriage and sex.

- God takes away what was a part of His marriage with the woman/older generation.
- This is a revelation of the covenant relationship between God and Israel.
- As long as Israel remains married to God, they enjoy all the blessings of the grace covenants.
- When the marriage breaks up (i.e., the spiritual covenant is broken), then the grace covenants are taken back.

The next verb is the Hiphil causative perfect of HIS.ALTI. The perfect is again the provisional prophetic future perfect. The causative shows that God is the cause behind the effect of the covenant blessings being snatched away. HIS.ALTI usually means to deliver someone from something bad. Here the covenant blessing are taken from those who use them for illegitimate things, such as idol worship. The thing is seen as rescued from being used for evil.

The Piel infinitive construct shows the purpose of the blessings which were taken away. The things were provided as a part of the logistical portfolio for the woman/Israel. Their purpose was partially logistical and partially to fulfill the promise of covenant blessings.

- The purpose is revealed because the woman was not using them for this purpose, but instead was wasting them on idolatry.
- In the prediction for their removal is a reminder that a covenant blessing from the most high God should not be used for idolatry.

Finally, there is the direct object 'EREWATAH, which means "nakedness". There is a double entendre here that has to do with what the woman was doing. It shows God's marvelous sense of humor, even in a very grave situation.

- She was committing adultery in order to get the things that God would have provided anyway.
- The things that God would have provided anyway should have been used to cover her nakedness.
- She was getting naked in order to get the things that God would have provided anyway, which should have been used to cover her nakedness.

The Impact of the Verse.

This verse turns to a new phase of Divine discipline. The first phase had to do with the prevention of her adulterous affairs.

The woman was prevented from engaging in adultery.

From her point of view, this meant that she could not get the things that she used in her idolatry.

From God's point of view, He would have provided those things anyway.

The first part of the prevention was the thorny hedge. In this prevention, she was allowed go on with the activity, even though the continuation would be painful.

The second part of the prevention was the wall. In this prevention, there was no adulterous activity allowed whatsoever.

Throughout these two categories of prevention, God still provided the things that she thought she could only get by committing adultery.

The woman suffered because of her frustration in her inability to get the things for adultery.

The second phase of Divine discipline is the removal phase. In this phase, the things are

actually removed. This is the phase in view in this verse.

The next phase will be revealed in the next verse.

Hosea 2:10

And now I shall completely expose her degeneracy to the eyes of her lovers. And no man will deliver her from my hand.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The Piel imperfect of the verb 'AGALLEH starts the further explanation of the second phase of discipline. The Piel stem shows intensity of action in the verb. The verb itself means to reveal a secret, or to uncover something that until now has remained unknown. The imperfect tense indicates that the action remains in the future, and that it depends on the volition of the woman as to whether it will come to pass.

1. Again we are reminded that God is willing to withdraw the discipline at any time that the woman is willing to repent of her adulterous and idolatrous ways.
2. God continues to be gracious right up to the very end, which comes in the sin unto death.
3. It is only from the human viewpoint that the relationship seems irreconcilable.
4. Guilt and unconfessed sin cause scar tissue on the soul, which appears as a barrier from the human side. It is never so from the Divine side until the very end.

What is revealed is interesting. NEBHELUTHAH is a fairly broad word group.

1. Its base meaning is found in the containers of the ancient world. Often these containers were made of animal skins, or of clay. It also came to denote the musical instruments, which were hollowed out gourds and pieces of wood. What these things had in common were their emptiness or hollow nature. Naturally, they came to mean "airhead" - that breed of senseless human being with a vacuum between his ears.
2. The animal skin would also wither, or deflate, and so the word came to mean degeneracy, and it was compared with the withering of a tree or plant which is dying.
3. This word was also used to describe a corpse in its decomposing state.

4. Probably the best word to use in this context is degeneracy.
5. Therefore this picture paints a vivid picture. The woman is senseless, a degenerate airhead. The result will be degeneracy and then death.
6. This state will be revealed to her lovers, and so they will no longer sleep with her, because now she is grossly unattractive to them.

The final verb is a play on words with the same verb in the previous verse. YAS.ILENNAH is in the Hiphil causative, which shows man as the cause behind the effect of her "delivery". The negative adverb LO negates the action, and so this verb is translated, "no man will deliver her".

1. In this context, the delivery is a release from the Divine discipline.
2. What God wants to come to pass, comes to pass. If He wants to discipline someone, no one can stop it.
3. In this case, the woman wants a man to "deliver" her, that is, to commit adultery with her, and give her the things for her Idolatry as payment.
4. The reason that the men will not deliver her, is that she has become unattractive because of her degeneracy.

The Impact of the Verse.

Degeneracy makes a person unattractive. This is probably why prostitutes always start young and are finished just a few years later. They are all used up, and very unattractive.

The woman's idolatry made her unattractive. So unattractive that no man would touch her.

Now that the source of all of her things (the true source, God) is dried up, the woman is desperate. However, she is so unattractive in her desperation that no man will sleep with her, and so she does not get what she wants.

Again, the intent is to focus on God and His message of repentance.

He still waits for His bride, even though she has become grossly unattractive to all other men.

He is the one who knew her before her days of adultery and idolatry when she was beautiful.

Principle: virtue makes a person attractive.

The beauty of a woman, or the attractiveness of a man is in the soul.

God is perfect. He is the source of all beauty and order in the world.

If your soul is a reflection of the character of God, then you will reflect His beauty.

If you fail to do this, then no amount of cosmetics, surgery, fanny tucks, nose jobs, face lifts, or other anatomical enhancements of any nature can make you beautiful. You won't be fooling anyone.

Principle: Degeneracy brings built in failure.

The more degenerate you are, the more you will fail. The more you fail, the more degeneracy you think you need.

The built in failure is a part of the divine discipline.

With God, you can recover your virtue, and thus your beauty.

With degeneracy, the unattractiveness gathers momentum.

Hosea 2:11

And I shall personally put to rest all of her exultation: her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all of her sacred seasons.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the hiphil causative verb WEHISHBATI. The causative shows God's personal intervention in the affairs of the woman/Israel. It is also in the perfect tense, and so again we have the prophetic future perfect, which shows the absolute surety of a future event. Again, there is a sense of humor or sanctified sarcasm here, because the root of the verb is SHABAT, from which we get sabbath. This is translated, "I shall personally put to rest".

The object of the verb is MESOSAH, which means exultation, or rejoicing. There exists in the meaning of this word a hint of sexuality, of the bridegroom who rejoices in his bride. The word serves as a heading under which several similar types of activities are listed. Each of them perverts the Law of Moses in some way.

The first on the list is the feast. The word HAG can be used of both pagan and sacred events. Here it is the former. The word includes eating and dancing and general celebration.

The second is the new moon celebration. In idol worship, there were monthly celebrations dedicated to the new moon. The worship of the moon predates the monthly celebration set down in the Mosaic Law. The idolatrous celebration was probably a fertility rite, calibrated to the monthly cycles of the cult prostitutes. Children conceived in this manner would then be dedicated to the idol, and at times be sacrificed.

The third on the list of celebrations is the sabbath. The original design of the sabbath was as a day of rest set apart for concentration on God. It is human nature to work, given the degenerative nature of the devil's world. Left alone, work will be done. This is why the command is given - so that there will be concentration on God - a concentration which restores the spiritual well being of the individual. This great tradition was perverted into a festival which concentrated on the idol of choice.

The list is summed up with the phrase, "and all of her sacred seasons". MO'ADAH is generally used to denote a preset time, or scheduled appointment. Since the idolaters had a highly detailed calendar of events, God uses this phrase to sum them all up.

The Impact of the Verse.

God tells the woman that all of her celebrations will cease. In fact, God is imposing an arbitrary sabbath on the idolatries of Israel.

Everything that she looks forward to with the rabidity that only an addict can have will be stopped.

The source of her stimulation is stopped - and this is in addition to the blockade on her idolatrous materials - with which she worshipped.

The purpose of this is to concentrate the woman's attention on God. Even to this last phase of Divine discipline, God's motive remains pure.

It is appropriate that God uses the verb form of Sabbath rest to describe the stopping of the idolatry, because the purpose of the sabbath was to concentrate on God.

The original sabbath occurred on the seventh day of creation.

Genesis 1:31, And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completely finished, and all their armies.

And on the seventh day God completely finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

And so God utterly blessed the seventh day and hallowed it completely, because on it God stopped from all his work which he had done in creation.

- To begin with, God, being omnipotent, did not need to rest.
- He stopped for another reason, most likely to enjoy what He had made. This is alluded to in Gen 1:31.
- The day is blessed and holy because of the cessation of activity, and the observation of the Divine work of creation.

Israel was commanded to observe the sabbath in much the same way - they were to stop everything else and reflect on God and His work.

- The man who keeps the sabbath is called blessed by Isaiah 56:1-2. "Thus says the Lord, 'Preserve justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come and My righteousness to be revealed. How blessed is the man who takes hold of it; who keeps from profaning the sabbath!'
- This blessing comes from knowing God. In the first verse, the justice and righteousness of God is in view. In the second verse, that justice and righteousness is concentrated upon during the sabbath - and that is the blessing!
- Ezekiel 20:12 makes it clear that the intent of the sabbath command was for knowledge - and relationship, "And also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them.

Our Lord made it clear that the sabbath was made for man, and not vice-versa, Mark 2:27, "And He was saying to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.'

This means that man is never to become the slave to the sabbath, much as the Pharisees had become through their legalism.

Furthermore, the sabbath was a part of the ritual plan for Israel, and is not a part of the plan of God for the church age.

Hebrews chapter four makes it clear that studying the word of God and staying in God's plan for the

church age is the equivalent of observing the sabbath in the age of Israel.

Therefore, when the woman/Israel set up a rigorous schedule of sabbaths for their idolatry, they profane the very heart of the spiritual covenant; the relationship with God covenant.

Therefore, when God tells them that he will personally cause these things to come to a stop, it is for the express purpose of re-establishing the original intent of the sabbath, which is relationship with Go.

Hosea 2:12

And I shall personally devastate her vine and her fig tree, about which she said, "They are just a hire to me, which my lovers gave to me." And I shall make them a forest and the animals of the field will eat them.

The Meaning of the Verse and Hebrew Notes.

The verse starts with the verb WA HASHIMMOTHI, which is in the hiphil causative stem, which shows God's personal involvement in the matter of the woman's discipline. This is not delegated - it is personal. The perfect tense shows just how sure that this act is to come to pass. It is an absolute. The verb has a double meaning of both devastation, and the reaction to it, which is shock and horror. You could say that her vine and fig tree will be devastated, and she will be devastated by the loss.

The verse then turns back to her previous life of prostitution. The things were gotten by just a hire. This phrase is a simple straightforward statement, using the verb to be and nouns in the subject and predicate. With this statement the woman's pride comes through. To get those things was a snap, just a hire, and her lovers gave them to her.

In the last phrase of the verse, God communicates that the things will be just fodder for the beasts of the field.

Hosea 2:13

And so I will pass in review for her the days of the Baals, on which she personally made smoke to them, and so she decked herself with her rings and her jewelry and then she went after her lovers. But me she had forgotten: an utterance of Yahweh.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the verb WEPHAQADETI, which is in its basic dictionary form.

1. It means to visit someone or something; to muster an army or pass in review; or to punish.
2. Here it denotes the pass in review of the woman's days of idolatry.
3. The days are passed in review before her eyes, and looking back after the disaster of the destruction of Israel, she will consider them with regret.
4. A military pass in review is a victory parade; it is a time in which the unit can show its stuff to their commanders and their public.

The next verb is the hiphil imperfect of QAT.AR, which means to offer or burn sacrifices. This is often used to tell of the sacrifice to a foreign god.

1. Whereas the burnt offering to Yahweh is a sweet smell, and it represents the righteousness of Christ, the one to a false god literally goes up in smoke, and that is what the word means here.
2. The idea of incompleteness shown from the imperfect tense gives us the notion of an act that accomplishes nothing, and so it is with idolatry.

The verb `ADHAH means to ornament or embellish or adorn or really deck out someone or something. It reaches the height of virtue when it talks about a bride who has really adorned herself for her groom. It is contrasted with some lesser things:

1. This word describes the trappings of a horse: an ornate saddle, a bejewelled bridle and stirrups, perhaps a golden breastplate, but still all for a dumb and often mean animal.
2. It also describes a scab as the ornamentation for a wound, and thus is used in the context of gore and healing.
3. Finally, it is used to denote the covering slab for a grave.
4. In this context, we must take the negative aspects of the word.

The woman wears the trappings, but she is just a nasty old nag of a horse.

The rings and jewels themselves are really an unseemly, gross scab, covering the open wound of a woman.

The things are a covering over the woman, who is a grave.

The next two verbs, HALAQ and SHAKH.AH, are both in the qal perfect, and they tell us about two past actions of the woman.

1. First, that she went after her lovers (to get the things, to participate in the idolatry).
2. Second, she forgot about God, she did not even know God in the least.

Finally, there is the name YHWH, which is a way of putting an end to the discourse on the discipline of the woman/Israel.

The Impact and Summary of the Verse.

This is the final verse in God's discourse on His discipline of the woman/Israel. Hosea is the mouthpiece, but God is the speaker.

The final statement is particularly poignant. "But me she had forgotten.

1. She was so involved in her adultery and idolatry that she had completely forgotten about God.
2. God, whom she loved and cherished, was no longer in her consciousness.
3. God, who treated her with patience and understanding had gone from her mind.
4. God, who forgave her and forgave her was remembered no more.
5. She had forgotten about the best thing that ever happened to her.

So, God brings to her mind something else, after all the discipline has come down the memory of her idolatry

1. All those years with the idols and the adultery have resulted in utter ruin.
2. Now she remembers them, and realizes that they have all gone up in smoke, and that she did not gain a single bit of benefit from them.

Hosea 2:14

Therefore behold! I myself am intensely persuading her, and I shall bring her into the wilderness and I will speak unto her heart".

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse

The verse begins with the conjunction LAKHEN, which shows the explanation of what has just been spoken. This verse begins the explanation of the divine discipline.

The interjection HINNEH beseeches the listeners to look, to listen even closer to what Yahweh has to say, to consider his discipline and its purpose.

The piel stem of the verb MEPHATEYAH indicates an intensity of action.

1. The verb is in its participle form, and here it denotes the ongoing action of the discipline.
2. The verb means to be simple minded, or open minded about a matter.
3. Here it shows God communicating in such a way as to bring about repentance in one who is willing to look at the facts, and be honest with them.
4. There really is no other way. This is the way in which we should witness to others. Be rational. Present the facts.

The prophetic future perfect of the verb HALAQ shows a future action of God, and one that will definitely occur. God is going to bring this woman into the wilderness.

God is going to speak to this woman's heart. Heart here is from the word IEB, and it indicates the right lobe of her soul, where true repentance takes place.

1. The meaning of this word is intimately connected with MEPHATEYAH, the word for rational persuasion.
2. Rational persuasion can only occur in the heart, the heart is the only place where true repentance can take place.

Finally, she is taken to the MIDBAR - the uninhabited wilderness. There are no people, no men for adultery, no market that sell the things for idolatry, no distractions, just God.

The Summary of the Verse.

The summary of God's discipline of the woman/Israel is in the word for rational persuasion.

God speaks to the heart of the woman, presenting rational arguments for repentance.

God still wants the very best for her, and His discipline is really rational persuasion, not random punishment.

Everything that God does to the woman/Israel has a purpose. Each part of her suffering is quite appropriate and a part of God's perfect design for her life.

So He takes her out into the wilderness, where it is quiet, and where she can remember everything that God has said and done. It is there that the discipline passes in review, and she has the opportunity to repent.

Some two hundred years later, after the rise and fall of Isaiah's generation, the nation of Judah would fall, and the Babylonians would destroy the great city of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah was left behind after most of the Jews were carted off into slavery. He sat down and recorded his lament over the fifth cycle of discipline in Judah. The Lamentations of Jeremiah are filled with sadness and over Judah's rejection of the spiritual covenant of God. But in the third chapter he wrote one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible.

READ HOSEA 3:19-38

Hosea 2:15

And from there (the wilderness) I shall give her vineyards and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will answer there as the day of her youth and as the days of her going up from the land of Egypt.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the qal prophetic future perfect WENATHATI. This is a prediction from God concerning a future blessing in the life of Israel.

The direct object of the verb is KERAMEYAH, which is translated vineyard.

1. A vineyard was a symbol of blessing and prosperity in Israel, since it was a luxury crop.
2. The drink offering came from the best wine, and the drink offering was a remembrance of Divinely given prosperity.
3. The first thing that Noah planted when he came off the Ark was a vineyard.
4. The second blessing is defined with the phrase WE'ETH 'IMEQ 'AKHOR. This is translated, "the valley of Achor".

5. AKHOR means literally, 'disturbance, or trouble'. It was the place of an interesting event in the life of Israel.

6. AKHOR is a narrow valley between Jericho and Jerusalem.

- Jericho is in the Jordan river valley, and it is the gateway into the promised land.
- Jerusalem, the city of David, represents all the prosperity of the promised land.
- When Joshua destroyed the city of Jericho in the great battle, the gate to prosperity and the promised land was finally open.
- However, there was one hitch. God had set certain rules concerning the plunder of the city. Achan, one man, broke those rules. The ban disallowed the people to take for themselves the precious metals of the spoil.
- Because of Achan's sin, the Israelites lost the battle of Ai.
- Achan confessed his sin, but he was killed under the law of capital punishment for what he did.
- The valley of Achor marks the site where Achan and his family were
- Achor's sin resulted in trouble for Israel, and it was a temporary roadblock on the way to the conquest of the promised land.
- The door was closed at the valley of Achor, and then it was opened again.
- The valley of Achor is a symbol in this verse.

It symbolizes the past, in the story that has just been told.

It symbolizes the present, because Israel is in a state of sin.

It symbolizes the future, in the millennial reign of Christ, Isa 65:10.

LEPHETHAH.TIQWAH. relates the significance of the blessing. TIQWAH is a word that means 'to wait' in Hebrew. LEPHETHAH is the word for door, or entrance, or opening.

1. At the valley of Achor, the Israelites had to wait. They were delayed by the sin of one man.
 2. Until the sin was discovered and handled the blessings of the promised land were on hold.
-

3. In this passage, the valley is actually a door of hope.
4. The valley represents discipline and hesitation on the way to blessing.

The verb WE'ANTHAH means to answer, or respond in a positive and humble manner. It is in the qal future prophetic perfect, and it shows the future of Israel, and her response in the tribulation and millennium.

The impact of the verse.

This verse is about the future response of Israel to the leadership of Jesus Christ.

The geographical location of the valley of Achor does not have future significance.

The valley is a symbol for the negative response of Israel during this time.

It is also a symbol for their positive response in the future, in the tribulation and under the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

The valley is a symbol for all the means to grace. Means such as the Word of Truth. Such as the ministry of the Spirit, and the logistical provision of God the Father.

It is a door of hope, because it is the grace of God, and it is all sufficient.

A summary of this verse: God is giving Israel fantastic grace blessings, and the means to obtain them.

The valley is a symbol for undeserved suffering.

1. The people of Israel did not all deserve to suffer defeat at Ai. Joshua certainly did not.
2. Achan's sin was a test, and the Israelites passed it.

The answer of the woman is the expression of her positive volition to God in the midst of undeserved suffering.

Therefore, the millennium is in view here.

Hosea 2:16

And it will be in that day an utterance of Yahweh you will call 'my man - husband, and you will not call to me again 'my master'

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the qal prophetic future perfect the verb 'to be'. It indicates that a future state of being will definitely exist.

The demonstrative pronoun HAHU with the preposition and noun BHAYYOM makes a very definite statement... "in that day". It is talking about the millennium.

N'UM YAHWEH adds to the clarity of the statement. This is an utterance of God. It cannot be changed. It will definitely happen.

Now for what will be. The qal imperfect of the verb QARAH plus the construct noun 'ISHI form the first part of the prediction. They are translated, 'my man'. In this case, it is the appellation that a woman makes to a man that she respects and loves. It is the appellation of the good marriage.

The second part of the prediction is the negative part. It is identical except for the negative adverb LO and the noun BA'LI.

1. BA'LI is a play on words here. It means husband in a negative sense husband when the issue of his authority is constantly at the front.
2. A good husband, though he has authority, hides it, and only makes it an issue when absolutely necessary. Leadership hides the issue of authority.
3. This is also the word used for the idols, the baals, and the woman's idol worship is the very reason that the husband's authority became an issue.
4. God exerted His authority when the woman/Israel became involved in idol worship, to the exclusion of her relationship with God.
5. God expressed His authority in the form of discipline.
6. The word BA'LI characterizes the master/slave relationship very well.
7. The woman enslaved herself to the idols, and thus God disciplined her, as a master disciplines a slave. The woman's attitude towards God was BA'LI, my master.

Hosea 2:17

And I will personally remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they will not be mentioned again by their name.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the hiphil stem of the verb HAMIROTHI. The hiphil stem shows that the subject of the verb is causing the action in some way. When it is used for a person, it shows that the subject is personally involved in the action.

1. The verb is in the perfect tense, and so this is the future prophetic perfect. It shows that though this is in the future, it will definitely come to pass.
2. The verb itself means to turn aside when it is used of apostasy. It can also indicate recovery from apostasy, which is repentance.
3. With regard to slavery, it means to set someone free, or remove the bonds of slavery. That is the meaning here.

The direct object of the verb is SHEMOTH HABE'ALIM "the names of the Baals".

1. The name of a person or a thing revealed its very essence. Baal meant slavemaster.
2. When you called someone or something by name, you knew them in some personal way.
3. The woman/Israel had an intimate relationship with these idols, and she called them by name.
4. The intimate relationship was also slavery.
5. By removing the names of the Baals, God is removing the woman from the slavery involved.

The next word is MIPIAM, which is translated, "from her mouth". The woman is communicating with the Baals. She has an intimate relationship with them.

The next verb is the niphil passive imperfect, which shows the effect of the removal of the names of the baals. They will not be mentioned again by their name.

1. This denotes that the Baals, although they might be a part of the woman's conscious memory, they are not mentioned by their name.

2. This shows that she will never again have a relationship with an idol.
3. The verb ZAKOR does mean "to remember", and when it is used of verbalization, it comes to mean mention.

God does not arbitrarily remove these names. He does not impose His direct will on an unwilling subject. Instead, the woman/Israel cooperates by means of her volition.

She will grow to the point where the idol worship no longer is a part of her life.

Hosea 2:18

And I will cut a covenant in that day with the animals of the field and with the birds of the skies and the insects of the ground; and I will abolish bow and sword and battle from the earth, and I shall personally lay them "to lie down securely."

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The first verb of the verse is in its dictionary form. It is the qal future prophetic perfect of the verb KARATH. God is the subject of this verb.

The direct object of the verb is BERITH, which is a covenant.

1. This covenant is 'cut' by God because it was customary to make a sacrifice whenever a deal was made, a boundary was set, or when two nations agreed to a treaty.
2. An entirely new covenant is in view here, one that will supersede all others made with the people of Israel.

The demonstrative adjective HAHU and the noun BAYYOM define the time of the new covenant. This is translated, "in that day".

1. This is the day of the Lord, often mentioned in Old Testament prophecy.
2. The Day of the Lord is a general reference to the last days, and so it can mean one of three things:
 - The tribulation.
 - The millennium.
 - The last judgment at the great white throne.

The next three phrases define the party of the second part of the covenant (God is the party of the first part).

1. 'IM is the preposition which defines the relationship of the covenant. It is translated 'with', but it conveys the idea of fellowship, friendship, and even teamwork. Therefore, God makes this covenant with those whom He considers His equals, and with those whom He wants to work together on it.
2. H.AYYATH HASSADHEH is the first party of the second part. H.AYYATH means animal, with a concentration on its vitality and activity. HASSADHEH defines their common abode, which is the field, or the countryside outside of the populated parts of the earth.
3. The second party of the second part is 'OPH HASHAMAYIM. 'OPH refers to birds and all creatures that fly. It means literally to flutter. Their abode is the SHAMAYIM, or heavens. This time it is simply the sky the free air above the surface of the earth.
4. The third party of the second part is REMES, which probably refers to insect life and the like. The word means to creep lightly, or touch gently. This is exactly how an insect moves about.

The substance of the covenant comes with the next clause: WEQESHETH WEH.EREBH WUMILEH.AMAH. This is translated all together in one quick sentence, and they are indeed closely related to one another. "And bow and sword and battle".

1. The verb 'ESHBOR is the qal imperfect, and it means to break something into pieces until it is destroyed. It also means to remove one thing from another. We will translate it "abolish".
2. The preposition MIN and noun HA'ARES define the place from which warfare is abolished. It is planet earth.

The second part of the covenant is related with the verb HISHKABEDTIM. This verb means to rest, or sleep for the night.

1. For an animal, this can be a vulnerable time, because of the presence of predators.
2. The adverb LABHET.AH tells us that the creatures will enjoy security. This word comes from the root verb form of BATAH, which means to trust. The creatures of the earth will trust God, therefore when they lie down at night, they will truly rest.

Hosea 2:19

And I will betroth you to me forever, and I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice and in virtue love and in mercy.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse begins with the verb WE'WERASHTIK in the Piel stem. The Piel is the stem of intensity. This verb means to betroth, but the Israelite idea of betrothal was somewhat different from our own.

1. From Today's Handbook of Bible Times and Customs , p.88. "A major part of this [betrothal] transaction was the negotiations over finances how much the father of the bride was to receive, and in what form. They then discussed the dowry and determined what goods were to accompany the bride. A disaster refund was then agreed on, so if ther husband were to die or the marriage were otherwise dissolved, a portion of the goods would be returned. After the betrothal they were referred to as wife and husband. However, they did not consummate the union or live together for another year.
2. God is now seen as the future husband of Israel. As such, He must pay a price, a dowry for His betrothed.
3. This dowry would be the most expensive of all times, because God would sacrifice His unique and only Son to purchase the sinful.
4. Of course, we know that the entire world is the betrothed, for Christ would die for all.

The preposition LE and the adverb 'OLAM combine together to form "forever". It is literally, "to the infinite future".

Again there is the verb WE'WERASHTIK. This time it is modified by four prepositional phrases.

1. BES.EREQ denotes the righteousness aspect of the betrothal. This represents the righteousness of the dowry, Jesus Christ. When Christ died for our sins, it was a great act of righteousness, the greatest of all time. That same righteousness is imputed to us at the moment that we believe in Him.
2. BEMISHPAT indicates the justice aspect of the betrothal. The cross shows the fantastic justice of God.

The only way that sinful mankind could have a relationship with God was if someone

completely sinless would willingly die for them as a sacrificial offering. Jesus Christ, the perfect God man, chose to die for our sins.

As a result, we can be saved on the basis of our belief in that death.

The other half of the equation is the imputation of Adam's original sin to us. This is what made it O.K. for God to impute our personal sins to Jesus Christ.

The sin of one is imputed to the many sinful; the sins of the many sinful are imputed to the one sinless.

The righteousness produced on the cross is imputed to the one who believes in the cross.

These things come from the justice of God; these things make you justified to live forever with Him.

3. BEH.ESEDH shows that the dowry is a great expression of virtue love on the part of God.

In eternity past, there was perfect love in the Godhead. This love, this relationship was so great, that God created creatures in order to enjoy that love with Him.

Since man is born into a state of sin, he is without that great love relationship with God.

God's love comes from within Himself. What I mean is this: it does not come as a result of His attraction to the human race. Since we are sinful, we are intrinsically repugnant to God.

But, because of God's great love, He desired the very best for us, and that meant sending His very own Son to the cross to die for us, so that we could enjoy that great love relationship with Him.

4. And BERAHAMIM expresses the great mercy of God in the dowry.

The mercy of God is the visible expression of His love. God's love is the principle of His motivation; His mercy is that principle in action.

The love of God is His motivation. The mercy of God is the cross.

The Impact of the Verse.

In this verse there is the prediction of the cross.

The cross is placed into the metaphor of betrothal.

Hosea was in a state of estrangement with his wife Gomer. This represented the state of estrangement between God and Israel. In a greater sense, it represented the state of estrangement between sinful mankind and God.

God predicts the future reconciliation of Hosea and Gomer; of Israel and God; and of God and man.

All of these reconciliations depend on the dowry of God; His unique and only son Jesus Christ.

Topic: RECONCILIATION

Four attributes of God are mentioned in reference to the dowry: righteousness, justice, love, and mercy.

- These four things represent well the revelation of the character of God.
- The love and righteousness of God are principles of His character.
- The mercy and justice of God are those principles in action.

A reminder: God reveals the details so that we might love Him all the more.

Hosea 2:20

And I will betroth you to me in faithfulness and you will know Yahweh.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

Again the verb WE'ERASHTIK is used to show the betrothal of Israel to God.

The last of the attributes of God displayed is BE'EMUNAH, "faithfulness".

The placement of this attribute makes it distinct from the others. God wants to emphasize this one over all others.

- He does so because Israel has been completely unfaithful to Him.
- The nation has chased foreign gods, participating in demonism and idolatry.

The result of Israel's orientation to this attribute is knowledge of God.

The word used for knowledge is WEYADA'AT. YAD'AH means intimate, relationship knowledge.

- It is used to denote knowledge in the soul, the "heart".

- It is used to describe sexual relations between a man and his wife.

It is this kind of knowledge which comes as a result of being betrothed to God.

The Impact of the Verse.

God desires us to know Him; to have a relationship with Him.

This is the most basic truth of all related to God: that He desires a relationship with us, and that relationship is the greatest thing we can ever know.

The faithfulness of God is His dependability He will always be a 'there' for us. We can always depend on Him and His Word.

Topic: FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

1. The faithfulness of God is based on His immutability. Immutability means that God never changes.
2. His policy always has been and always will be grace.
3. Grace applies both to salvation and the post salvation life.
4. The basis for salvation always has been and always will be the cross.

Knowledge of God results from orienting to Him in all of His essence, capabilities, and attributes.

1. Orientation to God's perfect and infinite essence results in humility.
2. Orientation to God's capabilities results in confidence in any situation.
3. Orientation to God's character results in spiritual self esteem and proficiency.
4. The only way to orient to God is through a relationship with Him.
5. Relationship with God means coming to know Him through faith perception of the truth.
6. Relationship with God means worshipping Him and relying on Him.

Hosea 2:21

And it will be in that day I will answer an utterance of Yahweh. I will answer the heavens and they will answer the earth.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

Before we begin this verse, let me introduce it.

This verse and the next one have to do with agriculture in the millennium.

The agriculture during the millennium will of course be exceptionally great.

These two verses concentrate on the subject because of the name of Hosea's first son, Jezreel.

The name Jezreel is a play on words. It means "God sows" in the Hebrew.

As we have seen, the first use of this play on words had to do with God's discipline of the nation of Israel. God had sown the discipline of Israel in Assyria, and soon the Assyrian menace would come to fruit in the destruction of Israel.

Now there would be a new use of Jezreel this time it would have to do with the great prosperity of the millennium. God has sown that great prosperity, and even though it has yet to come to pass, it most certainly will.

The verse begins with the phrase WEHAYAH BAYYOM HAHU'. "And it will be in that day".

1. This is our tip off that the subject of this verse is the millennium.
2. The qal perfect tense of the verb "to be" sets it in concrete. This will definitely come to pass, because this is the prophetic future perfect.
3. BAYYOM identifies the time of the prophecy as the end times. We know specifically that it is the millennium from the details of the next verse.

Next is the beginning of a procession of phrases which use the same verb.

1. 'E'NEH is the Hebrew verb "to answer". Since there is a procession of these, we have a chain of command from God to the plants themselves.
2. The idea behind using the verb "to answer" is clever. It shows God responding to human petition.
3. The response of God shows that He does listen and does respond to us.
4. The response of God does not in this case go directly to the person who petitioned, but to the answer itself.

5. Once the answer is clear, then the response is made known to the person who made the petition. This is God's way of answering.

The surety of these future events is made abundantly clear by the statement, NEUM YHWH, "an utterance of yahweh". This means that these are the very words of God Himself. And note that answers to prayer are the very words of God Himself to you!

1. This means that you should be thankful no matter what the answer might be even if it is not exactly what you wanted.
2. This means that you can be confident no matter what the answer might be.

The rest of the verse says, "I will answer the heavens and they will answer the earth.

These are the first two links in answered prayer.

First, the answers go from God to the heavens. This is a reference to the angelic host, who will carry out the answer on earth. They carry out God's Word without any kind of compromise.

Second, the answers go from the heavens to the earth. This is the activation of the answer in space and time.

These two links show the intermediate steps in answered prayer.

The intermediate steps do not cause any loss of integrity from God's original answer.

There is no record of the request, or the presentation of that request to God by Jesus Christ. This passage concentrates on the reply. The reply has a protocol, and God has chosen that protocol for His glory.

Hosea 2:22

And the earth will answer the grain and the new wine and the fresh oil and they will answer Jezreel.

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

This verse continues the thought of the last. Again, it shows the process of answered prayer, beginning at the top with God. The last verse went like this: "And will be in that day I will answer an utterance of Yahweh I will answer the heavens and they will answer the earth.

Now this verse continues with WEHA'ARES TA'ANWEH, "and the earth will answer

There are three direct objects in this sentence

1. HADAGANE is "the grain".
2. HATIRO is "the new wine
3. And HAYYIS.HAR is "the fresh oil".

These three things represent the prosperity of Israel in the millennial state.

1. The earth is the source of all these things; it is the rich soil that provides the environment for growth.
2. The soil of the millennium will be the richest of all time.
3. Remember that agriculture was about the only business of the ancient world. Today there are many others, and there are likely to be many others in the millennium.

The grain represents the a logistical prosperity of the millennial state; it was a sustenance crop.

The new wine represents the additional prosperity of the millennium it was a luxury crop.

The fresh oil represents the spiritual prosperity of the millennium it was a symbol for the ministry of the Spirit.

These three things in turn are the essence of the answered prayer to Jezreel.

1. Jezreel means "God sows".
2. All of those things which represented prosperity were things that were sowed in the ground.
3. God planted them, He nourished them, and He brought them to fruit.
4. Remember that answered prayer is our lifeline to God; it is the 'proof' that God exists. It vitalizes our relationship with Him, confirming His essence and capabilities and attributes.

Hosea 2:23

And I will sow her to me in the earth, and I will show compassion to Lo Ruhamah, and I will say to Lo Ammi "You are my people." and he will say "you are my God".

Hebrew Notes and the Meaning of the Verse.

The verse starts with the verb WUZRA'TIHA. This is in the qal future prophetic perfect. It sets a future event in stone. It means to sow a seed.

1. The seed that is sown is the nation of Israel.
2. Israel is a priest nation of God, functioning as an ambassador to the whole world.
3. The nation is sown in the earth so that it will grow and become known to all the earth, and bring glory to God.
4. The plant brings glory to the planter.

The second verb is WERIH.AMTI, which is the piel perfect of the verb RAH.AM. RAH.AM in its root form means to love someone. In the piel intensive, it shows compassion by intensifying the meaning. It does not mean 'passion', but 'compassion'. It is in the perfect tense, and it is a future prophetic perfect. The direct object of this verb is Lo ruh.amah, the daughter of Hosea.

1. This compassion is the compassion of Yahweh expressed in the millennium.
2. The compassion is given in response to the positive volition of the remnant of Israel expressed during the tribulation.`
3. The essence of the compassion is the perfect environment of the millennium itself.

The third verb is the qal perfect WE'AMARTI, which is the verb "to say", or "to speak". It denotes the verbal expression of words, and here it is something more an official announcement from the throne of heaven. It too is in the future prophetic perfect.

Hosea Chapter Three

Hosea 3:1-5

And then Yahweh said to me, 'Again, go love a woman, one loved of a friend, utter adultery, [love her] as the love of Yahweh for the sons of Israel, for they are [always] turning unto other Gods and lovers of raisin cakes of grapes.'

So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a half of barley.

Then I said to her, 'You will dwell with me for many days. You will not commit adultery, nor will you be [someone] to a man; and moreover I will be [that someone] toward you.'

For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols.

Afterward the sons of Israel will return and intensely seek the Lord their God and David

their king; and they will express dread to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days.

Hebrew notes and the meaning of the verses

Verse 1

1. The love that Hosea is to have for his wife Gomer is love based on attraction for her. The Hebrew word is 'EHABH, which is the rough equivalent of the Greek (phileo). It is in the imperative mood, so this is a command from God. God could only command Hosea's attraction to his wife if she was worthy of such love. Chapter 2:19-22 makes the repentance and recovery of Gomer very clear. She is indeed worthy.
2. Presently, she is loved by a neighbor - a neighbor is one of her johns! The verb 'EHABH is used again to denote her relationship with a RETSA - a friend or neighbor, someone within the immediately periphery.
3. This adultery and prostitution is decried by the Hebrew participle WUMNA'APHETH. It is here in the piel intensive stem, denoting the intense nature of her sin - a reflection on prostituting oneself to one's neighbors.
4. The inseparable preposition KE sets up a comparison between Hosea and Gomer and God and Israel.
5. The explanation for this comparison comes from the conjunction waw, which points to the 'adulterous activities of the nation of Israel.
6. The raisin cakes are A'SISE, those used in sacrifice to idols. The addition of `ANABHIM, "grapes", shows that raisin cakes were also made out of other fruit. Raisin is a more general reference to dried fruit. These cakes were also a dessert favorite, and considered a stimulant, more probably from the sugar high obtained from eating them.

Verse 2

1. The verb translated 'buy', WA'EKREHA gets its original meaning from the verb for dig. It reveals a kind of action where there is bartering and even bidding for the product. This is especially enlightening in that Hosea is bartering and bidding for his wife. That he bought her is in itself remarkable. Hosea went down to the street corner and bought his own wife. She was selling her body to others so that

she could buy the paraphernalia to participate in idol worship.

2. A shekel was the equivalent of about .4 ounces of silver; fifteen of them would amount to six ounces. On today's market that would be approximately thirty three dollars.
3. A homer and a half comes out to about twelve bushels. At \$2.17 a bushel, this adds another twenty six dollars to the previously tallied thirty three dollars for a grand total of fifty nine dollars.
4. Together with the 'digging' and the rather strange method of payment, we can assume that Hosea had to scratch to get the job done.

Verse 3

1. The plural adjective RABIM indicates that the duration of time that Hosea's prostitute wife will stay with him will be a long one. The actual amount remains unspecified.
2. The imperfect tense of the verb TESHBI indicates action that has yet to be completed. Here, we interpret this action as still in the future. The verb itself means to live, remain, reside or dwell. Here is something that Hosea's wife has not been doing: living with her husband.
3. The second imperfect verb TIZNI is negated by the adverb LO. So Hosea predicts that this activity will not occur for a long time. The root meaning of the word concentrates on female sexual immorality. Prostitution is not necessarily a part of this act.
4. The combination of the negative adverb LO and the conjunction WAW translates into the English 'nor'. The imperfect tense of the verb HAYAH, 'to be', adds another thing to Hosea's list. Consider these the 'three commandments' of Hosea to Gomer. This commandment is quite stringent; it requires Gomer never to be a part of another man's life; she is never to even have an affair of the heart.
5. Hosea then adds that he will be the man that she cannot be to any other man; it is put simply and elliptically with two personal pronouns, 'Ani 'ELAYIK ... I unto you.

Verse 4

The focus shifts from Gomer to Israel.

1. The verb "to dwell" is the same as before. It retains the same tense and the same meaning. This is, however, a prophecy; a forthtelling about the future of Israel. This contrasts Hosea's three commandments, which depend on the volition of his wife.
2. The negative construct 'EN [preposition] plays a very prominent role in this verse. It is translated 'without'.
3. There are six things that the nation of Israel will live without.
 - a. MELEK, king.
 - b. SHAR, prince.
 - c. ZEBHAH., sacrifice.
 - d. MATSEBHAH, sacred pillar or standing stone.
 - e. 'EPHODH, the sacred vestment of the priest.
 - f. TERAPHIM, the little household idols.

These six things are not exactly what they appear to be. In fact, all of them are normal things which have become the objects of idolatry for the people of the Northern Kingdom.

Legitimate rulership from their own people will be eliminated - kings and princes.

Legitimate sacrifice will be eliminated - sacrifice and ephod.

Illegitimate idol worship will be eliminated, both small and large, the TERAPHIM were small household idols, really just a trifle; the sacred pillars were huge places that marked the sites of demon worship.

The children of Israel will dwell without these for many days because they will be conquered by the Assyrians. This is a prophecy of the time between the fall of the Northern Kingdom, and the coming of Jesus Christ.

This is not a prophecy about the church age, and it could not be, since the church age remained a historic mystery at this time.

Nowhere in Scripture is any detail of the church age revealed before the upper room, where Christ gave a few scant details to His disciples, and this just a few short weeks before it would come down.

Scripture does predict the first advent of Christ, the cross, the resurrection, the ascension. It also predicts the tribulation and the second advent and

millennium. But it does not predict anything about the church age. There is a reason for this: the church will only come into existence if Israel fails to accept Christ at the first advent.

If Israel had accepted Christ, then there would have been the cross, resurrection, and ascension, followed immediately by the tribulation, second advent, and millennium. The time between the ascension and the return of Christ would only have been seven years.

But, Israel rejected her Messiah, and so the tribulation, second advent, and millennium were put on hold for the insertion of the church age. This is called intercalation. The purpose of the church is to prepare a body of believers for co-rulership with Christ.

The doctrine pertaining to the Church Age is called "mystery," because it was not known to the Old Testament writers. Rom 16:25-26; Eph 3:1, 6; Col 1:26-27.

Doctrines pertaining to the Church Age are not found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Where Church Age information would have occurred, there is a parenthesis.

Doctrine pertinent to the Church Age is inserted, intercalated by the New Testament epistles.

Illustrations of the great parenthesis concept in the Old Testament.

- a. Between Dan 2:40()41.
- b. Dan 7:23()24.
- c. Dan 8:22()23, 11:35()36; Hos 3:4()5, 5:15()6:1.
- d. Ps 22:22()23.
- e. Isa 61:2a()b.

Verse 5

1. The adverb 'AH.AR shows a lapse of time between the dwelling without and the thing mentioned next in this verse. It is translated, 'afterward'. This is an unspecified sojourn.
2. The sons of Israel are to return 'RASUBU', and intensely seek Yahweh their God and David their king. The intensity of the seeking is revealed by the piel stem of the verb WUBHIQSU.
3. It is in the perfect tense, and so is considered done even before attempted.

4. The translation 'they will express fear' comes from the perfect tense of the verb PHAH.ADHU. It too is considered done even before attempted. This dread is utter respect and humility before the Lord. The kind of respect and humility that can only be present in the worst of human travail.
5. The target of their expression of fear is God and His goodness. This is worship in the tribulation. There will be no earthly good to appreciate, and divine good will be only visible through the lives of 144,000 Jews.
6. The time of this will be the latter days. The Old Testament Prophecies on the latter days concentrate on the tribulation and the millennium. Here the concentration begins with the tribulation.

Summary.

This passage looks at the future, and even predicts it. This is prophetic foretelling. However, the first principle of foretelling is that it concentrates with a message for the present generation.

In this case, the message is directed to the faithful few in Israel. It is designed to give them hope for an eternal home.

By revealing the future restoration of Israel through Hosea and his wife, God is instilling eternal hope in the godly of the last generation of the Northern Kingdom before their destruction.

As the faithful see the kingdom fall around them, and the utter destruction of their own people, they will be able to endure knowing the present God, and the future for their nation.

First is the the sojourn of Israel on foreign soil. They will be without kings and princes, priests and sacrifices, the large and small trappings of idolatry.

Second in the restoration of Israel.

Between the two and hidden from view is the church age.

But first, the Jews must be given an opportunity to respond to their messiah.

Hosea Chapter Four

Introduction.

This chapter now turns from the personal life of Hosea and family experience power prophecy to applied prophecy against the Northern kingdom.

The bulk of the rest of the book is forthtelling - the interpretation of historical trends and current events against the canon of Scripture.

Therefore, many of the social ills of the nation will come to the fore; and their current spiritual lives will be measured.

Hosea 4:1

Hear the Word of Yahweh, sons of Israel, for Yahweh has a dispute with the inhabitants of the earth: there is no faithfulness and there is no virtue love; and there is no knowledge of God in the earth.

The noun RIBH describes a clamorous dispute. Domestic disputes are always the worst. Police officers fear the call for help in a domestic dispute. This is the kind of dispute that Yahweh has with Israel - it is family, and it is serious. Now, understand that God does not get ecstatically angry as what happens in many domestic disputes; RIBH is used to note the serious nature of God's bone of contention with the Northern Kingdom. It is not just a passing inconsequential thing. It is not a spat.

This dispute has a direction of sorts. It is 'LE', 'to Yahweh', and 'IM, 'with the inhabitants of the earth'. This means that the inhabitants of the earth have offended Yahweh, and therefore the dispute. This idiom makes it clear that the dispute is the fault of the earthlings.

Hosea describes the foundation of God's dispute in three parallel statements.

- a. First is 'EN 'EMETH. 'EN is the particle of negation. It can be translated 'nothing', but when it is in the construct state, it is translated, 'there is no'. This comes as a stronger negation than 'LO'. It shows a pretty absolute state of nothingness.
- b. The object of the negation is 'emeth, which should be translated 'faithfulness'. This is often used to describe the Divine Temperament, but here it applies to Israel. Since it is completely negated, God says that he contends with Israel because they lack faithfulness. Remember,

faithfulness is the extension of willpower over time. God is saying that Israel does not have faithfulness - they lack concentration and willpower, especially directed toward God. Faithfulness only functions when sustained by personal love for an object. This faithfulness is contrasted by idolatry and adultery.

- c. Second is 'EN H.ESEDH. Again there is a strong negation of a Divine character attribute. This time H.ESEDH describes the motivation of the sons of Israel. They lack pure motivation, which is virtue love; personal love for God. Personal love only functions when sustained by impersonal and knowledge. Impersonal love for God is not a requirement. Impersonal love only applies to imperfect objects. Knowledge always applies.
- d. Third is 'EN DA'ATH. This comes from the Hebrew verb YADHA, which means intimate personal knowledge - application or even relationship knowledge. This is also negated by 'EN, so it shows that no one even knows God, much less loves Him or is faithful to Him. It all begins with faith perception - the desire to know God better.

Hosea 4:2

Cursing and deceiving and murdering and stealing and committing adultery give birth to violence upon violence.

This verse communicates one principle: Crime begets violent crime. In other words, criminals are always degenerate, and crime creates more crime. Revenge is a strong motive in crime, and when the state does not punish, more crime will surely follow.

No less than five infinitive absolutes follow one after the other. The Hebrew infinitive absolute expresses strong emphasis when it precedes the main finite verb of the sentence. Here all five infinitive absolutes are equally emphasized as being the source of what is to follow. They are emphasized as being strong in character, and clearly the source of violence.

- a. The first is 'ALOH, cursing. This is not just swearing an oath, but an ecstatic bursting forth of verbal anger. It can be a curse against anything, but ultimately it is a curse against God. This is not necessarily a crime, but it leads to it.

- b. Second is KAH.ESH, deceiving. This verb originally meant to cringe, disappoint, or even grow lean. In contrast to verbal lying, it is deception by non-verbal means... it is deception by body language or facial expression, or even tone of voice. It is deception by activity. This is not necessarily a crime, but it leads to it.
- c. Third is RATSAH, murdering. This is in contrast to the QATAL in the Hebrew, which means to kill for legitimate reasons. RATSAH of course is a crime.
- d. Fourth is GANOBH, which is stealing. Any kind of pilfering, burglary, extortion, blackmail, larceny, or embezzlement comes in this category of steal. It is a broad generalization. These are all definitely crimes.
- e. Fifth is NA'OPH, committing adultery. This is one of two things: sexual relations with someone other than your spouse when you are married, or sexual relations with someone else's spouse. This was and is still a crime according to God's law.

All of the above give birth to further bloodshed. The verb is PARATSU, which is a graphic, gory description of birth. This does not bring the picture to mother holding the child in the hospital room, clean and anesthetized after the event. This verb describes the tearing of flesh as the head comes forth, and all the bleeding and pain that occur with birth. It shows that the list of five things all give birth to violence in the goriest way.

The Hebrew word for violence is simply the plural of blood, which is DAM. The idiom in this verse is literally, bloodshed touches bloodshed. It reveals a perpetuation of violent bloodshed from one sin to the next.

The basic message of this verse is that crime was running rampant in Israel at the time. This was a part of the five cycles of discipline for the nation.

Hosea 4:3

Therefore the earth will mourn and all of the inhabitants will languish in it; they will be destroyed with the animals of the field and with the fowl of the heavens and also the fishes of the sea.

1. This is of course the fifth cycle of discipline. It is important to note that God reminds those in the third cycle that the fifth cycle is just around the corner. Each of the cycles of

discipline look forward to the fifth and final cycle.

2. The qal imperfect of TE'EBHAL records a forthtelling: she will mourn. The subject of this verb is the earth, HA'ARETS. This concentrates on the physical landscape of Israel. Its mourning is a forthtelling of famine and the destruction of all that the land produces.
3. The next verb is the pulal perfect of the verb 'AMAL. 'AMAL means to languish, or grow weak; the process of atrophication is the perfect illustration of this. It means weakness brought about by inactivity. Even the verb stem denotes a state of permanence and inactivity. This is not a foretelling, since this stem can only occur in the perfect. The subject of this verb is the inhabitants of the earth. This includes only man. What a great picture of the cosmic mire! Hopelessness and the welfare state. This is a passive verb, so no free will is expressed. It just happens.
4. The final verb has one subject: the inhabitants of the earth. The animals, birds, and fishes are also included in the final forthtelling of the verse. The passive tense of this verb again indicates the helplessness of the subjects. This time they are destroyed. The verb actually means to gather together, and it probably displays the gathering of animal souls to God. It is important to notice that animals suffer when man suffers. There are consequences.
5. Conclusion. This verse is the beginning of a several verse discourse on the final destruction of the Northern Kingdom. There is mourning, and weakening by inactivity, and destruction.

Hosea 4:4

Surely let no one contend, and let none judge; for your people are as those who contend with the priest.

This verse turns back to look at the blame factor; essentially God tells Israel through Hosea that they have no one to blame but themselves.

The first two verbs, 'contend' and 'judge', are both cohortative imperfects. The force of meaning is, 'do not even try to judge'.

There is a great tendency of the oppressed to blame others, anyone but self. The downtrodden and unfortunate will commonly blame others before they blame themselves. They are very slow

to take responsibility for their own problems because of their own arrogance.

It is only by taking the first step of humility that anyone can take charge of their lives, and pull out of the cesspool of the cosmic system. You must stop blaming others for your problems.

Contending with the priest was something that was parallel to blaming others for your problems. The priest was simply an illustrator of the plan of God; but not often an expert on the interpretation of what he did in the ritual. Priests simply obeyed the ritual proscription without asking why. Interpretation was the job of the prophet. Therefore contending with a priest was a completely useless endeavor.

Hosea 4:5

So you stumble today, and a prophet also will stumble with you at night; and I will destroy your mother.

The first two verbs in this verse are in the perfect tense. They foretell an event that is set into the Divine Decree. This is a prophecy about the future of Israel.

The first part is really about the ghost of Israel present. They will stumble. The picture is of a blind man stumbling along the street, unable to find his way, or a drunk shambling and stumbling down the alley, with no idea of what he is doing or where he is going. This illustrates the spiritual degeneracy of Israel. They are spiritually blind, and literally drunk. The verb itself is KASHAL, and it is in its dictionary form here, the qal perfect.

- a. This is the present time for Israel in the middle of the eighth century, B.C.
- b. Spiritual and physical degeneracy are the norm for the citizens of this nation.
- c. The definite article HA plus the noun YOM communicates that the timing is in the presence.

The second part is a clever construction: it jumps forward to the future of Israel.

'at night' is a metaphor of the dark future of Israel, of its history after its destruction by the Assyrians. This destruction began in 733 B.C. with the occupation of the Northern territories of the nation. The destruction was complete with the defeat of the capital of Samaria in 722 B.C.

The nation will continue to struggle and stumble like a bunch of blind drunks during this time of exile.

With the people of the Northern kingdom will be a prophet, stumbling right along with them.

The identity of this prophet is not revealed, but my guess is that it is Nahum was the only true prophet of the Northern Kingdom after the fall. He was from Galilee, and his ministry was directed toward the destruction of Assyria, which finally occurred in 612 B.C.

There were prophets who were sent to give the gospel to Assyria, like Jonah.

There were prophets sent to tell Israel that unrepentant Assyria would be their destructor, like Hosea.

And then there was Nahum, who was sent to foretell the destruction of the destructor.

In this symmetrical square dance of prophecy, God was perfectly just to all of the involved nations.

Nahum prophesied from the ruins of his home town, which was in Galilee, the town which later gained the name Kapernaum, town of Nahum.

Really, Nahum was a prophet of the Southern Kingdom, but from the North. He was more likely an exiled Northerner whose family hailed from the destroyed town of Elkosh.

The prophet Nahum uses the verb KASHAL twice in his ministry.

- a. In Nahum 2:5 he uses it to ridicule the once-great military of Assyria. They stumble in their march. "The rainbow battalion
- b. In Nahum 3:3 he uses it to predict the military defeat of Assyria's bumbling army. "They stumble over the dead bodies.

The last part of the verse predicts the ultimate destruction of the Northern Kingdom.

The qal perfect of DAMAH indicates a cessation of national function.

DAMAH is not a word that depicts violence. It is a word that describes the calm after the cessation of function.

It still allows for violence, but it concentrates on the deathly calm after the fact.

Mother is a reference to country. "The motherland".

Hosea 4:6

My people will be destroyed from the failure of knowledge, for you have rejected the knowledge, and I will reject you from ministering as a priest to me. Because you forgot the instruction of your God, I will also forget your sons.

"my people" is AMMI. Hosea's second son was Lomami, and here we are about to gain explanation on his name.

The verb DAMA again explains destruction from the viewpoint of the quiet after the violence of the actual destruction of the nation.

This verb is in the niph'al perfect. The niph'al is the passive stem, so the action applies back to the subject of the sentence instead of being produced by it. The perfect tense reveals an event that is set into the divine decree as absolutely certain. This is another foretelling.

The preposition MI plus the noun BELI describes the cause for the destruction. "From failure of" BELI shows a failure that finds its source in just plain wearing out. It is like an automobile tire that goes flat. The tread wears down until it is bald, and then until the cord shows through, and then the tire goes flat at the first sharp object. In the same way, the positive volition goes down, and then down some more, until disaster strikes.

DA'ATH points to Bible Truth. It defines knowledge by what God knows. This concentrates on the perceptive end of faith perception, the intake side. They have failed in getting the truth into their souls.

Next is a tit for tat kind of construction, "you reject me, I reject you." There is nothing irregular here.

Because Israel has rejected God, He rejects them from being His priest nation, His ambassadors.

Hosea 4:7

As they were becoming many [expanding] so they sinned against me. I will change their glory into dishonor.

The sin grew commensurate with expansion of the nation of Israel. The preposition KI and the adverb KEN work together to form the 'as... so' clause. It is a clause of equal expansion.

The qal infinitive construct of the verb RABAM describes an expansion. Expansion in numbers and expansion in territory both apply to Israel during the period described. Expansion in spiritual greatness did not occur at all.

The verb HATA' is the equivalent of the Greek (hamartano). It describes a missing of the mark in some way. Here, it is very exact: it is the missing of God's mark... the sin is against God. We know from other Scripture that sin is any thought, word, or act against the perfect righteousness of God.

The result of this expansion of sin is described by the last sentence. God will change [MUR] the glory of Israel [KEBHODHAM] into dishonor [QALON].

The glory harkens back to the expansion.

Therefore, the dishonor must affect the two parts of that expansion.

The expansion of population will be reversed through war, disease, and famine.

The expansion of territory will be destroyed through foreign acquisition and war.

Hosea 4:8

They eat [endure the consequences of] the sin of my people, and they increase their appetite through their sin.

The subject of this sentence is an unspecified 'they'. They are the people of Israel.

The verb eat is YO'KHELU, and it is a metaphor for bearing the consequences of your actions. In the agricultural society of the time, a common figure of speech was 'eat the fruit of your labor', that is, what you grew on your farm. This figure then expanded to embrace the negative side in the law of volitional responsibility.

The idea is further expanded by the phrase, 'and they increase their appetite through their sin.'

The more they sin, the more they suffer.

The more they suffer, the more they hate God, the more they reject His word, the more they accept the cosmic counterfeits and lies, the more unhappy they become, the more entrenched they become in lust and addiction.

The people of Israel are trapped in the cycle of self-destruction.

Hosea 4:9

And it will be like the people, like the priest. And I will visit his ways against him, and I will personally turn his deeds back to him.'

This verse adds more to the law of volitional responsibility as presented in the previous verse.

It shows that the priests will follow the people into their degenerate ways.

The comparison is drawn with the inseparable preposition KI, and is set up in an exact parallel.

So the priests will follow exactly in the people's footsteps.

This came true with chilling accuracy, and is a reliable historical trend today.

The priests without integrity will cave in to the demands of the people.

If the people want entertainment and stimulation, then the priests will provide it.

If the people want a populous local assembly, then the priests will do what it takes to bring people in.

If the people lack integrity, then priests without moral courage will follow.

There are certain demands that should never be met. If the people demand from the priests that which does not promote spiritual growth, then the people should be put in their place.

For 'priest' you can substitute 'pastor', or even 'politician'. Priests, politicians, and pastors all follow the people.

The rest of the verse is a rehash of the law of volitional responsibility that centers on the priests. They will pay for their cratering to the wrong demands of the people.

Watch this historical trend in our own nation. When the people want a church that is a social club, they hire social director types as their pastors. When the people want a government that substitutes their responsibilities as citizens, they elect bureaucrats instead of leaders.

Hosea 4:10

Indeed they will eat but they will not be sated. They will commit fornication but they will not give birth. For they have forsaken to wait for Yahweh.

Verse ten reminds us of the fruitlessness of sin and life in the cosmic system.

No sin finds reward. No system of sin results in prosperity.

The reason. The have left behind waiting for God.

Waiting for God means letting Him solve your problems. It means utter dependence on Him for everything in life. This waiting is the Hebrew verb SHEMOR, which has a basic meaning of 'keep'. It comes to mean "wait", with the idea of dependence over time.

You can only do this if you know Him through faith perception. Waiting for God is the end result of the faith perception process.

The verb 'AZABH describes leaving or departing something, and thus being absent from it.

Hosea 4:11

Fornication and wine and new wine take away heart.

This verse is a cute verbal joke. It is written in the language of a two-year-old, and it describes the taking away of the human comprehensive abilities.

New wine is TIROSH, the wine from the most recent grape harvest. It is not much good for taste, but it intoxicates just as well.

The people are getting drunk from the new wine because they are too full of lust to wait for the wine to age.

They are so anxious to get drunk that they are exhausting the wine supply, so that the most recently fermented stuff must be drunk.

The new wine is the thunderbird, the blue nun, the crummy wino kind of wine.

The abstract noun ZENUTH describes the concept of sexual immorality without focussing on the act. This was before they allowed nudity in films, before the age of cinematic realism.

The three things listed here are all the objects of addictive sin. It is worthwhile to note that this verse reflects on the idea of addiction as it applies to the destruction of the soul.

Remember - general idolatry leads to the specific. General idolatry is a distraction from relationship with God, while specific idolatry is demon worship. Along the way to specific idolatry general idolatry destroys the function of the soul.

The qal imperfect of LAQAH relates a general principle of truth about addictive sin. It is

something that is never complete... something that is timeless. The root meaning of LAQAH is "to take". General idolatry takes away leb, or heart. Heart here is understanding, the ability of the mind to perceive and apply information.

Compulsive concentration as the distraction factor, the enemy of organization.

Repetitive and habitual failure as the weakening of the will.

Invasive doubt and doublemindedness as the strengthening of indecision. James 1:6-8.

Inhibitive secularism as the roadblock to eternal perspective. Both dependence and grace approach.

Destructive dissipation related to your time. Eph 5:18.

Cosmic rationales as the destroyer of motivation.

The double life as the destroyer of integrity.

Addictive sin as the destroyer of faithfulness.

Hosea 4:12

My people consult his tree and his staff declares to him. For a spirit of fornication misled, so they committed fornication from beneath their God.

This verse is about guidance. These people who have participated in general idolatry have now reached the point of chronic unhappiness. At that point, they desire guidance to the objects of their desire. Guidance in romance, because their romantic lives are tremendous failures due to the absence of virtue. Guidance in business, because their financial lives are tremendous failures due to the absence of virtue. Guidance, guidance, guidance!

But the thing is, they are trying to fill a God sized emptiness, and only God will do.

So they consult trees and wooden staves make declarations of guidance.

But the thing is, it is a piece of wood, living or dead, a piece of wood. They have so destroyed their intellects that they consider a tree or a dead piece of wood as more wise.

The spirit of fornication is an abstraction of the act. This is the germ of the idea that is planted in the mind by the old sin nature. They are 'dragged away and enticed' as James so aptly put it in the first chapter of his epistle.

The use of the personal pronouns 'his' and 'him' makes this non-specific. What this does is add insult to injury. Not only do they consult trees and dead pieces of wood, but it also does not matter at all which one.

This is the new age movement. Substitute 'crystal' for 'tree', and you have it.

The acts of fornication are mentioned as being 'beneath Yahweh'. This is a good point that brings the omnipresence of God into the picture. Now, the children of Israel may be oblivious to their own sin, but God is not. The godless never negate God through their denial.

Hosea 4:13

They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains and upon the hills. They offer incense beneath an oak and a poplar and a terebinth because her shadow is good. Therefore your daughters commit fornication and your young wives commit adultery.

Specific idolatry destroys guidance. True guidance comes through the application of virtue.

- a. In the virtue of dependence on God.
- b. In the virtue of justice, related to character.
- c. Related to motivation, the virtue of mercy.
- d. Related to approach, the virtue of proficiency.
- e. Related to planning, the virtue of organization.
- f. Related to willpower, the virtue of self-control.
- g. Related to temperament, the virtue of faithfulness.
- h. Related to communication, the virtue of integrity.

This verse and the one previous reveal not only an absence of guidance, but the specific consultation of demons for guidance.

This verse also continues the idea of non-specific consultation. The kind of place chosen for the guidance session is chosen for the reason of comfort alone. They go to nice places. They love the outdoors, creation, but they hate the creator.

An interesting result of all this specific idolatry is the general idolatry of their children. The preposition AL plus the adverb KEN is the Hebrew conjunction 'therefore'. It is literally 'unto thus', kind of a 'one thing leads to another' statement.

A pattern is clearly set: the daughters commit fornication. Their young wives commit adultery. One leads inevitably to the other. Both verbs are in the imperfect tense, showing that the activity is an ongoing thing. The first is the qal stem, which describes the ongoing acts of fornication in the young women. The second is the piel intensive stem, which shows the criminal act of adultery, one which is punishable by death.

Hosea 4:14

I shall not pass in review upon [punish] your daughters when they commit fornication, or upon your young wives when they commit adultery. For the men go aside with the harlots and they 'sacrifice' with the temple prostitutes. And a people that does not discern will be thrust down.

The verb PAQADH means to visit, but it is more technically here a military term that means to 'pass in review.' The idea here is that God is going to have the history of Israel pass in review before Him, to determine their fitness as His priest nation. The other military analogy that comes from this verb is the idea of muster. The nation of Israel had a great number of men in a system of reserves. To muster them would be an act of preparation for war, or to check on military readiness. Here God is checking on the spiritual readiness of His nation by calling them to muster.

The doctrine of fairness. God's disapproval extends to the men. They are hardly blameless in this evil society. The conjunction KI is explanatory here, and thus translated 'for'. It points to God's reasoning behind his restraint of punishment for the women.

Two verbs make the fornication and adultery of the men almost comical. They 'go aside' with the harlots. This verb is YEPHARED and it is a piel intensive verb. It shows the urgent nature of their separation. Their lust is so built up that they cannot wait to get a moment's privacy. They 'sacrifice' with temple prostitutes. Not only do they make a religion out of sex, but their sacrifice is in the piel intensive as well. It is an urgent sacrifice indeed.

The end of this verse speaks of the collective discipline of the nation. God does not call to muster the women for their fornication and adultery, because the men do the same thing. By way of fairness, neither could God punish the men for their 'sacrifices' because of the activity of the

women. But He does discipline Israel, and they are called to muster for one sin: the refusal to know God.

The verb bin means to discern, or understand a thing. This concentrates on perception in the right lobe of the soul, not just perceptive comprehension, but more than that; application-type knowledge. The verb is in the imperfect tense showing the persistence of the negative volition of Israel. It is imperfect, the action is incomplete, it continues without stopping.

God desires for His people to have an application knowledge of Him. Not just an academic comprehension, but a comprehension that is oriented to a relationship with Him.

The result of this lack of knowledge is YILABHET. The niph'al passive of this verb points out that Israel will receive, not produce the action of the verb. God is the producer. The imperfect tense shows that this is a forthtelling, that it still depends on the volition of Israel, and the time is not up when that volition can function. The verb itself means to 'throw down, so that the object thrown makes hard contact with the ground.' You would use this word to denote the spiking of a football after a touchdown. You would use it to denote the throwing of something [like a tomato] in order to cause its destruction.

So God will throw down Israel to cause her destruction, and for the reason that she does not know Him.

Hosea 4:15

If you Israel are committing fornication let not Judah be guilty. And don't you come to Gilgal, and don't go up to Beth Aven and don't swear 'as Yahweh lives'.

The word GILGAL was onomatopoeic, reciting the sound that a squeaky wheel made when it went around and around: gilgalgilgalgilgalgilgal. Its verb form meant to 'roll', or 'roll away'. It could also denote anything that was round.

Gilgal was a town in Israel down near the Jordan River, just a short ways northeast from Jericho.

It was the first military encampment of the Children of Israel in the promised land.

It was the terminus of a great victory procession that began in Shittim, 14 miles east of the Jordan, Joshua 3:1.

It was here that the twelve stones were set as a memorial to the crossing of the Jordan.

Joshua 4:1-7. "Now it came about when all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan, that the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe, and command them, saying, 'Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight.'"

So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe; and Joshua said to them, 'Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

'Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.'

It was here that the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ, led the army of the angels, and revealed himself to Joshua on the night before the battle of Jericho.

Joshua 5:10-15, "While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal, they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. And on the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.

And the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year. Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, 'Are you for us or for our adversaries?'

And he said, 'No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord,' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, 'What has my lord to say to his servant?' And the captain of the Lord's host

said to Joshua, 'Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so.

So, it was an important place of national heritage, their Plymouth Rock. Their Smithsonian Institution. People would often go to worship there, and it was even used as a seat of judgment by Saul. There was instituted a celebration of Gilgal, the thanksgiving holiday of the nation of Israel. This was held as a part of the feasts of passover and weeks.

In later years, Gilgal became a place of demon worship, a center of specific idolatry. It was a double perversion to worship Satan at this place, as it is a double perversion to praise the Japanese at our own Smithsonian. Oh! Travesty of Justice!

Back to the verse: Hosea exhorts the southern kingdom of Judah to stay away from Gilgal, and their worship of the devil there. He uses the negative cohortative TABO'U, 'don't come'.

Hosea knows that the destruction of his own nation, the Northern Kingdom, is all but certain.

So he looks south. He exhorts Isaiah and those of his generation to worship the true and living God.

BETH AVEN translates, 'house of nothingness'. It was a place near Ai, the site of Israel's defeat due to the wickedness of Achan. It too was a place of specific idolatry, demon worship. House of nothingness is a joke against idolatry, which is the worship of nothing. BETH AVEN stood against BETH EL, the house of God. Again, Hosea exhorts Judah to refrain from ascent to the house of nothingness.

The final exhortation of Hosea to Judah is to refrain from making the oath, 'As Yahweh lives'.

What a great falsehood this was on the lips of idol worshippers. They worshipped dead idols in the house of nothingness and on a holy ground of national heritage, and yet they swore, 'as Yahweh lives'. Of course this would be a ground for any lie, because the hypocrites did not believe in the living God, and acted like He did not exist at all.

The exhortation from the ten commandments is to never take the Lord's name in vain; never use His name out of context of relationship with Him. And yet this is exactly what this oath does when it comes from the lips of unbelievers.

Hosea 4:16

Since Israel rebelled as a heifer who is rebelling, Yahweh will now graze them as a lamb in the pasture.

This is a difficult verse to translate, and to interpret. It begins with the conjunction of conclusion, KI. KI begins a conclusion by pointing to the evidence for the conclusion. It is translated, 'since'.

The subject of the sentence is Israel, and Israel is further identified by the qal perfect verb SARAR. This should be translated, 'Israel rebelled'. There is a contrast between Israel in this verse and Judah in the previous verse. In the previous verse, God warns Judah about becoming a harlot like Israel. Now the narrative shifts back to Israel.

God now compares Israel to a heifer, and the point of comparison is rebellion.

- a. The heifer in the Old Testament can represent one of two things: the ritual sacrifice of the red heifer, as proscribed in Numbers 19, or just an animal with certain mannerisms. In our verse it is the latter.
- b. The heifer was a young cow that had yet to give birth. This was a spoiled animal. It seldom did any hard work, and was often given an inordinate amount of feed. Because these animals were spoiled the farmers and ranchers of the day often noted their rebellious nature. They are not animals beaten down by service to their masters. They still have much spirit left, and are very difficult to domesticate.

The result of all this is that God will now graze them like a lamb in the pasture. But here God fattens the lamb for slaughter.

The temporary prosperity of the time is simply a time of fattening for the slaughter. The discipline contrasts the prosperity, and therefore stings a lot more.

Since this is the slaughter, the final discipline of Israel, God is not using this as a wake-up call for them. Instead, this slaughter will stand as a wake-up call for Judah, the southern kingdom.

Judah will witness the destruction of Israel in the middle of a fairly prosperous era, and get the idea that prosperity does not matter, but relationship with God does. The pain of Israel's going from riches to rags will make a great lesson for Judah.

Do not assume that because of the great prosperity of this nation that we are enjoying Divine blessings. God fattens us for the slaughter!

Hosea 4:17

Ephraim is united to idols, you let him alone!

This verse addresses the Southern Kingdom with a command: "leave the Northern Kingdom alone.

The reason is their dedication to idols. The participle HABHUR relates a special kind of bond. It is the binding of spells and magic charms. This binding often included elaborate rituals designed to unite the target and the spell; things and actions which would supposedly make the spell 'stick' to the person.

Here, Israel has bound herself to the idols. Through rituals and sacrifices and various commitments Israel is now bound.

This binding applies to both general and specific idolatry. The binding of general idolatry is the addiction cycle. The binding of specific idolatry is the worship ritual involved.

God commands Judah to leave Ephraim alone. He uses the hiphil causative stem in the command. He does so to make this really personal. A verbose translate would be 'cause yourself to let him alone'.

You cause yourself to do so by concentration on God through the word.

Hosea 4:18

Their liquor expended, they really fornicate. Her shield dearly loved ignominy.

The qal perfect verb SAR describes the using up of a commodity so that it is cast aside. It is the wino throwing away his bottle after he has completely consumed the contents.

The commodity expended is identified as liquor, and in fact is hard liquor, high-alcoholic content.

So they drink until they are out of liquor, and then they fornicate.

The verb for fornicate is in the hiphil stem. This is the causal stem, and it shows the personal involvement of the one producing the action of the verb. The infinitive absolute denotes an extreme intensity of action. So the fornication is personal and intense.

Next is the noun MAHINEAH, translated shield. This is a metaphor for the leadership of Israel. The shield protects. God designed national leadership to protect us from self-destruction.

The leaders dearly love dishonor. The kind of love is AHABH, the base, human, attraction based love. This love is strengthened by the adverbial expression HEBU. It is translated 'dearly'.

QALON is dishonor. It is the object of the leadership of Israel's love. QALON is the strongest word in the Hebrew for the concept - ignominy is a good 8. The people drink until the drink is exhausted, and then intensely participate in fornication. The leadership has a love affair with dishonor. They are all fattened for the slaughter.

This then is a confirmation of the necessity for the final cycle of discipline.

Hosea 4:19

A spirit bound her in its wings, and they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

The first part of this verse is another description of discipline; the second half a prediction of the results of that discipline.

This binding described here is one that is spiritual, not natural. The noun RUAH can be translated wind or spirit. Spirit works better in the context of the second half of the verse, which is specific idolatry. The picture is of helplessness, of being caught up in the wind like a leaf, and blown along. This is a double entendre.

Israel will be caught up in the future events of destruction, just as she is now caught up in the specific idolatry, and completely unable to guide herself. The picture is one of loss of control over one's destiny. When the discipline begins, the control ends.

God through Hosea portrays the natural result of the loss of control, which is shame. The shame of Israel is directed toward her participation in idol worship.

Israel will finally wake up when she loses control in the wake of the Assyrian destruction, but at that time it will be too late.

Hosea describes this spirit as having wings. Wings represent the appendages used for flight, and so describe what is attractive about that spirit. Since this is a fallen angel, there is nothing really attractive about the angel itself, but it promises soaring flight, and that promise is attractive.

Hosea Chapter Five

Outline and Overview.

This chapter divides into two parts.

The first half, verses 1-7, concentrates on the judgement of Israel for their harlotry from God, paying some attention to specific acts of harlotry and idolatry.

The second half, verses 8-14, anticipates the final discipline of Israel, and spends some time on the specific details of that fifth cycle. It also sends a warning to Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Verse fifteen stands separate from the rest of the chapter, more or less a summary of God's purpose in the judgment and discipline.

In this chapter, Hosea becomes the conduit for God's message to Israel. Really, it is mostly God, and very little of Hosea's humanity enters the picture.

Hosea 5:1

Hear this O priests! And give attention O house of Israel and give ear O house of the king! For the judgment is for you. Because you were a trap to Mizpah, and a net spread out over Tabor.

The Jews had begun to use these two mountains in Israel for idol worship. Thus they are a trap.

Both of these mountains were famous watch towers from which they would watch for the approach of the enemy from the North. Now they are a trap for the people. They provide temptation. Formerly a symbol of watchfulness they now epitomize the opposite.

On these watch-mountains they now welcome the deadliest of enemies - fallen angels.

A note: Mizpah is right on the mutual border between Israel and Judah, as are Gilgal and Ai. The southerners would only have to travel a few miles to participate in the idolatry at these spots. That is why the southern kingdom is warned about these specific places of idol worship.

Hosea 5:2

And the revolters have gone deep in slaughter, but I am a correction to all of them.

The slaughter here is the Hebrew SHAHATAH, which denotes the slaughter of animals, for whatever reason.

It can be for legitimate reasons, such as food or animal sacrifice.

It can also be as here, the slaughter of animals for demon worship. The description of Israel wading deep into slaughter is a really good description of the depth of degeneracy.

The discipline is MUSAR, always Yahweh putting divine discipline on someone or some group for their own good.

Though Israel wades deep into degeneracy, Yahweh disciplines them on the chance that they respond.

Hosea 5:3

I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me.
For now you have committed fornication, O Ephraim. Israel is defiled.

Interesting. Ephraim was the dominant tribe and largest territory in the Northern Kingdom. God tells us that the pollution of this tribe extended to the entire nation. Indeed, the picture is of rape.

Ephraim commits fornication and Israel receives defilement.

The niphil stem of the verb NITMA reveals that Israel does not produce this action, but receives it. The produced action is the fornication of Ephraim and the verb that describes it is HIZNEBA, and is in the hiphil causative stem. The cause is the fornication of Ephraim; the effect is the defilement of Israel.

God knows Ephraim and his degeneracy; he sees what goes on in Israel at the hand of Ephraim and it is not hidden from His view.

Hosea 5:4

Their deeds will not allow them to return to their God, for a spirit of fornication is in their midst, and they do not know Yahweh.

General and specific idolatry make it quite difficult to have a relationship with God.

A spirit of fornication works in a twofold manner:

First, it reveals an addictive complex of sin related to fornication.

Second, it reveals a personal relationship with a fallen angel.

This is a double entendre of general and specific idolatry.

Idolatry and relationship with God do not ever mix. They are mutually exclusive.

The idolatry must be relinquished in order to initiate relationship with God.

Do not confuse this by thinking that anyone's past can abrogate the possibility of relationship with God. Such is not true.

What the verse does say is that their present behavior is incompatible with God, and that they must leave it behind in order to gain Him.

This does not mean that idolaters are instantly 'cured' of their addictive relationships with demons.

- Any demon possession immediately ceases at the moment of belief in Christ.
- Addictive behavior, in some cases, does cease at the moment of belief in Christ. And in many cases, the object of addiction just switched to something else.
- However, many new believers revert back to the form of their idolatry.

It is abundantly clear from this verse that the idols must be rejected for one to believe. In fact, the very expression of belief is a tacit rejection of idols.

Hosea 5:5

And the Majesty of Israel testifies in His presence [face], and Israel and Ephraim will be tripped by their iniquity; also Judah will stumble with them.

The word G'ON describes often the majestic nature of God. It serves as a synonym for 'the glory of God'. So this is God here.

God testifies in His own throne room, with the result that discipline comes against the Northern Kingdom.

The discipline itself is described by the niphil verb YIKASHELU. In the active voice it is stumble, while in the passive, it is more less, 'trip'.

Since this is the passive voice, the Northern kingdom does not produce the action of the verb, but instead receives it. They do not stumble, they are tripped by their own iniquity.

So they fall because of their own iniquity - their general and specific idolatry.

But an interesting add-on here: Judah will stumble with them.

- The verb is in the prophetic future perfect tense. This prediction will most certainly come true.
- The time remains undefined, so that no one gives up using fate as an excuse.
- Remember, God uses the destruction of the Northern Kingdom as an example to the Southern. "Pay attention! See what I am doing to you neighbors to the north!"

Hosea 5:6

And they walk with their flocks and with their herd to seek Yahweh. But they will not find Him; He withdrew from them.

Here is a verse that hits home. It is at the time a very popular thing to 'seek Yahweh'. And so they go on pilgrimages looking for God.

Looking for an omnipresent God must be an interesting and time consuming task.

Of course you never have to look for God! What hypocrisy! First they 'X' God out of their lives through general and specific idolatry, then they go looking for him, like they had lost their car keys or something. This is utter pig-headedness.

In Colorado, of course, we go looking for God in the mountains. In Israel it was apparently popular to take a flock of sheep and wander through the countryside looking for God with your sheep in tow. This is why they have religious retreats, you know. To look for God. I have been to many of them, and I can say with confidence that God is no different at a retreat than He is in the inner city. Do not get caught in the trap that you can only think things through by getting away from it all. This is lazy thinking and a fallacy.

The fact of the matter was God had withdrawn from Israel as a part of His discipline. And let me tell you, when God withdraws from you, forget about finding Him.

If they would repent, God would return.

Hosea 5:7

They dealt treacherously against Yahweh, for they bore strange children. Now a new moon will devour them with their portion [land].

The new moon was a time for idol worship - consider it an astrological kind of thing. At the new moon the people would get involved in orgiastic fornication, and as a result, many women would conceive.

But now those children are monsters - they hate their parents and their souls are full of bitterness toward God.

This will come because they have children out of wedlock, and they continue to commit adultery against the Lord.

In Israel, the family has been destroyed, from this has come much degeneracy. The family is a major restraint on the sin nature.

- For parents, it ties down with responsibility.
- For children, this means training.

The family is an organization which is designed to prepare children for life in this world.

The parents should be constantly training their children. They should be trained to respect authority and to be dependable when given responsibility.

- They should be trained in manners, so that they will fit in to any social situation.
- They should be trained to discipline themselves, mind and body.
- They should be trained to respect and be sensitive to the opposite sex.
- They should be given the gospel, and the plan of God.
- They should be trained to be patriotic.

This training, when done properly, strengthens the child's conscience against the schemes of the cosmic system, and is a great system of prevention against self-destruction.

The training should include both punitive discipline and a fair system of reward.

The training should break the child's arrogance, but not his spirit.

The loving and sensitive training from the mother to the male child protects the women of the next generation from male tyranny.

The loving and sensitive training from the father to the female child protects the men of the next generation from female tyranny.

Having children outside of wedlock or raising children from a divorce makes it very difficult for them to be normal.

Parents who do not make a commitment to one another will not make a commitment to their children.

Parents who give up on each other also give up easily on their children.

The majority of divorces are the result of self-centered arrogance, and that arrogance cannot properly raise children. Some divorces are necessary and unselfish; some are done to protect the children.

Fornication and adultery is just plain self-centered arrogance, and children who come from such a liaison suffer from their parents' arrogance. Therefore, having illegitimate children is a disaster for any nation. However, an illegitimate pregnancy is not a legitimate excuse for abortion.

The conclusion: **do not get involved in fornication and adultery.**

Hosea 5:8

Blow a horn in Gibeah, a trumpet in Ramah. Sound an alarm at Beth-aven: 'Behind you, Benjamin.'

The first part of this verse has to do with geography. The place names here are all inside the border between Israel and Judah.

In previous verses the place names have been across the border inside Israel (Gilgal, Beth-Aven), or right on the border (Mizpah). Now they are in Judah, and coming ever closer to Jerusalem. Gibeah is only five miles to the North of Judah's capital.

All of these have in common that they are hills, and places of demon worship. They were also signal hills, so that in sequence the alarm goes from south to north. It makes the picture of a warning going from Judah to Israel. Hey! Wake up! You are degenerate!

Gibeah had quite a history for the Jews, even before the separation of the kingdoms.

Gibeah came to characterize the degeneracy of Israel under the Judges, and their need for greater restraint under a king. Judges 19-21 recounts a event that was paramount in degeneracy.

1. At that time, a traveler came to Gibeah and was spending the night. And certain demon-possessed homosexual men came to the house where he was staying, and demanded that he come out to the town square and have a homosexual orgy with them.

2. Instead the traveler and his host threw their women out to the homosexuals in order to appease them.
3. The traveler's concubine (mistress) was raped and tortured all night by the demon homosexuals, and she died as she tried to claw her way back into the house.
4. The man then cut this woman's body into twelve pieces and sent them to the twelve tribes of Israel. He lied and exonerated his guilt, and as a result 400,000 soldiers mustered at nearby Mizpah. They came from all the tribes.
5. What followed was a great battle, in which the people of Gibeah were destroyed.
6. But the people of Israel continued to make terrible misapplications and commit great acts of injustice against the people of the region of Benjamin. Benjamin suffered terribly because of the acts of a few and the lies of one. The mob ruled, and there was no king. 19:1 and 21:25.

Gibeah became the headquarters of Saul, the first king of Israel. Israel needed a king, but they needed one who had his sin nature under control. Saul was not that man, and so Israel learned a hard lesson with their first king.

Gibeah was also the route for the invasion of the Assyrians. Isa 10:29.

Hosea would mention Gibeah twice more.

1. 9:9, "They have gone deep in depravity as in the days of Bibeah; He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins.
2. 10:9, "From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, O Israel; there they stand! Will not the battle against the sons of iniquity overtake them in Gibeah?

Ramah and Beth-aven are less perspicuous places in Israel. They are high places and signal hills, so Israel and Judah would recognize the need for warning.

Hosea 5:9

Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke; among the tribes of Israel I make known what has been made certain.

The devastation here brings to mind both the desolate nature of the country after its destruction,

and the emotional impact of that on the people. Those who are left will be horror-struck; incapable of human function due to their shocked emotional state. Writers of Hebrew utilized SHAMMAH to describe the emotional state of a rape victim.

The rebuke here is one from the legal context of Israel. It is the rebuke of a lawful judge, a judge who stands with the righteous law behind him. The desolation will be a just one indeed.

God will make this judgment known. It is the hiphil causative of YADHA. God will make Israel intimately know the cause of the judgment. This done through the devastation.

The judgment itself is now set in the decree. The destruction of Israel will come to pass, and apparently soon. With the niphil participle of the verb NE'EMANA, God says that the judgment is set in the divine decree.

Indeed it has been since the day the decree was set in motion.

But God does something significant here: He reveals the decree to the condemned. The point now is Judah.

To this point, Hosea has described the fifth cycle of discipline in seventeen different ways.

Hosea 5:10

Are the princes of Judah like those who move a boundary? On them I will pour out my wrath like water.

Eighteenth description of the fifth cycle of discipline, but for the first time the message moves to Judah.

Now see the clever nature of this verse.

Moving a boundary stone was a heinous crime. It was tantamount to stealing land. When the people set boundary stones they would sacrifice to God and worship Him to commemorate the sacred nature of private property, and its source.

Now Hosea has just described a number of places that are border towns between Israel and Judah. And the most recent bunch are actually inside of Judah. God is moving the boundary stone of discipline, because Judah has crossed the border with their idol worship.

This is placed in the form of a question. "Do you really want to do this?"

The picture of God's wrath is interesting as well. Water pours swiftly and drenches all with impunity. So it will be with Israel. They are all going to get wet.

Hosea 5:11

Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, because he was determined to follow a drunken command.

Nineteen, and back to the Northern Kingdom.

Ephraim was the first to go. Assyria attacked that portion of the Northern kingdom and subdued it first. There was then a long pause while the rest of the nation waited to see what would happen next.

This verse was apparently produced at that time after the fall of Ephraim. The destruction of that region is clearly portrayed as having already occurred.

But the real star of this verse is the final sentence: "Because he determined to follow a drunken command."

- There is somewhat of a mystery word here. It is TSAW. It is an undeclined, almost nonsense form of TSAWAH, 'to command'. It is used in only two other verses in the Bible: Isaiah 28:10 and 13. It is worthwhile to see it there.
- In verse ten, it goes like this: QITSAW LATAW TSAW LATAW QAW LAQAW QAW LAQAW ZIR SHAM ZIR SHAM
- For it is precept upon precept; precept upon precept; line upon line; line upon line; a little here a little there.
- The context is the drunken nation of Judah, and the way that they speak. So Isaiah tells them what they need, and mocks them by speaking with a drunken slur. The same goes for verse 13.
- But TSAW here in Hosea is not mockery. It literally portrays the command of a drunk. It calls into question the moral authority of those who command and yet are also alcoholics.
- Worse yet, if you determine to follow the command of a drunk, what does that make you? If you are a slave to a slave of alcohol, you are low indeed.
- So this is the reason for the discipline of Israel.

Hosea 5:12

And I am as the moth to Ephraim and as the rotteness to the house of Judah.

So God is the principle of entropy to the region of Ephraim, and to Judah. Hosea describes this principle of decay in two ways.

First, with the moth. The moth got into the fabric, especially wool, and ate it. This is the decay of clothes.

Second with the rotteness. This described tooth decay, and worms eating the supporting beams of buildings. It describes the decay of any man-made structure.

But these are metaphors that in each case portray the downfall of regions and nations, not just the inanimate, but the political and social as well. God is behind it.

Hosea 5:13

When Ephraim will see his sickness, and Judah his wound, and then Ephraim will go to Assyria and will send to King Jareb. But he will be unable to heal you, and the wound will not depart from you.

Hosea summarizes two historical events here.

The attempt of Menahem of Israel to win over Tiglath-Pileser in 738 B.C., as recorded in 2 Kings 15:19. Here, Menahem exacted a special tax on the wealthy to bring a treasure trove of silver to Assyria.

The attempt of Ahaz of Judah to win over Tiglath-Pileser in 734 B.C., as recorded in 2 Kings 16:7.

King Jareb is Israel's mocking nickname of Tiglath-Pileser. It means literally, 'king combat'. It was right in one sense. The Assyrian army was tough, and way tougher than either Israel or Judah.

Well, ultimately these bribes did not work. They delayed the destruction for a season, or a few years, but that was it.

The sickness here refers to the military weakness. Of course, an idol-worshipping nation of drunks and fornicators is going to be exceptionally weak on the field of combat. So it is with Israel and Judah.

The bribery itself is blasphemy before the Lord. It compensates weakness with weakness. It was a human viewpoint attempt to stave off the justice of God, and it could not possible work.

Hosea 5:14

For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away and there will be none to deliver.

Twentieth description of the 5th cycle of discipline.

The discipline will be like the attack of a lion. The lion comes at night and hauls away its victim to a safe and quiet place where it can devour it.

First there is the roar, then the plaintive screams of the victim, then deafening, shocked silence. This is the attack of the lion, and the discipline of the Lord will be much the same, and note that there will be none to deliver. The peace and quiet of desolation is quite different from the prosperous peace of the God-blessed nation.

Hosea 5:15

I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

Being shattered by the discipline of the Lord will bring desire to know Him. There is helplessness before Him, and so it will be with Judah, and the survivors of Israel who live in Judah.

Such violence and oppression and devastation tends to bring on true humility.

Now this transitions to Chapter Six, which is Hosea's plea to his countrymen to change their minds, to repent.

Remember, the fifth chapter concentrates on what God predicts in the fifth and final cycle of discipline. The sixth chapter contains Hosea's pleas to his country to respond before it is too late. Where there is life, there is hope.

Hosea Chapter Six

Introduction

This sixth chapter is a message from the heart of Hosea. Remember, he has now seen the recovery of his own wife. He has witnessed the grace of God transforming her from both general and specific idolatry, and he has formed the conclusion that if she can do it, then so can they.

The fifth chapter was the product of God speaking to Israel through Hosea, but it was the direct message of God. Now the sixth chapter is the product of Hosea under the enduement of the Spirit.

While there is life there is hope. Though the fifth and final cycle of disciple has been mentioned twenty or more times so far, it is not necessary for it to apply to this generation in the Northern kingdom. The fifth cycle is a fixture in the Divine Decree, but the question of when remains unanswered.

This chapter was written after the Jezreel valley campaign, but before the final destruction of the nation. Remember, at Jezreel the nation lost its ability to resist the Assyrian military might.

Both Judah and Israel are the targets of Hosea's message.

Hosea 6:1

Come, and let us return unto Yahweh; for he himself has torn that he may heal us; He has smitten that he may bind us.

The qal imperative of the verb "to come together" with the cohortative imperfect of SHUB combine to make a very compelling personal plea from Hosea. "Come, and let us return..."

With that combination Hosea both commands and pleads. Commanding in the hope that there is someone left with authority orientation, pleading in the hope that someone is left with a conscience.

The direction of the return is to Yahweh, and, of course, relationship with Him. Yahweh is also seen as the source of the Israelite defeat, which Hosea describes with two words.

TARAQ means to tear the flesh violently, such as what happens in the attack of a wild animal. God used it in Hosea 5:14 to describe the attack of the lion. Yahweh produces this action.

YAK means to smite or strike someone *without* the intent to murder them. A good illustration would be to strike someone to disarm them, but not kill them. It is a blow that knocks someone out.

But in this verse, God does these things in order to bring Israel back in line. It is harsh and violent, but there is still hope.

He tears in order to heal. This is certainly true in the medical profession. From our modern frame of reference we can easily relate to this necessity.

He smites in order to bind. This is the exact picture of the police officer arresting the violent criminal. He knocks him out in order to arrest him.

Hosea pleads with Israel, and as his evidence he cites the divine discipline that they are currently

enduring. However, Hosea goes another step: he attempts to communicate Yahweh's pure motivation in providing the discipline.

Hosea 6:2

He will restore us to being after two days; on the third day he will personally raise us that we may live before his face.

Now here is a messianic prophecy, certainly so.

But first the part intended for Israel in that time.

The 'after two days; on the third day is an uncommon figure of speech - an epanorthosis, an absolute correction.

So this is in part a parallelism, but one in which the second line corrects the first. It is like saying, 'there are four people in this room', and then remembering yourself you say, 'there are five people in this room.'

So the first line is not truth, while the second line is absolute truth.

The first line is false for two reasons:

1. First is the verb. Once created, all beings are eternal. HAYAH is the verb to be, and it does not work well at all with the concept of resurrection, even though it is okay with the rebirth of a nation.
2. Second is the number of days. After two days is fine, but on the third day is far more specific. After two days can be a million; on the third day limits the field dramatically.

The second line is truth, because,

1. First, it uses a more accurate word for resurrection - YAQMENU, which often means 'to rise up after sleep or injury'. Isaiah 26:19 uses it exactly in this way, and Psalm 88:11 as well.
2. Second, because it uses the right number of days for the resurrection of the Messiah. 1 Cor 15:4, "and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures," The only Scripture possible for this is Hosea 6:2.
3. God the Holy Spirit inspired Hosea to correct himself in order to fit this verse into a messianic expectation.

Some examples of the Messianic prophecies: Special credit to "Evidence that Demands a Verdict", by Josh McDowell.

1. The prediction of the coming Messiah: Gen 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:15; Psa 89:20; Isa 9:6; 28:16; 32:1; 35:4; 42:6; 49:1; 55:4; Esek 34:24; Dan 2:44; Micah 4:1; Zech 3:8.
2. The prediction of the first advent: Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; Dan 9:24; Mal 3:1.
3. His Deity: Psa 2:7,11; 45:6,7,11; 72:8; 102:24-27; 89:26-27; 110:1; Isa 9:6; 25:9; 40:10; Jer 23:6; Mic 5:2; Mal 3:1.
4. His humanity: Gen 12:3; 18:18; 21:12; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 49:10; 2 Sam 7:14; Psa 18:4-6,50; 22:22-23; 89:4; 29:36; 132:11; Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; 33:15.
5. John the Baptist: Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1; 4:5.
6. The nativity: Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; Jer 31:22.
7. The place of birth: Num 24:17,19; Mic 5:2.
8. The adoration of the Magi: Psa 72:10,15; Isa 60:3,6.
9. The flight to Egypt: Hosea 11:1.
10. The massacre of the infants: Jer 31:15.
11. A priest like Melchizedek: Psa 110:4.
12. A prophet like Moses: Deut 18:15.
13. Ministry in Galilee: Isa 9:1,2.
14. Miracles: Isa 35:5-6; 42:7; 53:4.
15. Purification of the Temple: Psa 69:9.
16. Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem: Psa 8:2; 118:25-26; Zech 9:9.
17. Betrayal for thirty pieces of silver: Zech 11:12.
18. Crucifixion, Psa 22:14,17.
19. Offer of Gall and Vinegar. Psa 69:21.
20. Cries of pain, Psa 22:1; 31:5.
21. Casting of lots for His robe, Psa 22:18.
22. Bones not broken, Psa 34:20.
23. Piercing of the side, Psa 22:16; Zech 12:10; 13:6.
24. Burial with the rich, Isa 53:9.
25. Resurrection, Psa 16:8-10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17; Hosea 6:2.
26. Ascension, Psa 16:11; 24:7; 68:18; 110:1; 118:19.

The resurrection prophecies are:

Psalm 16:8-10, "I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I

will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neith wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.

Psalm 30:3, "O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol; Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Psalm 41:10, "But thou, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them.

Psalm 118:17, "I shall not die, but live, and tell of the works of the Lord.

Messianic prophecies give us hope, that is, great confidence in the accuracy and usability of the Word of God. They instill in us a doctrinal orientation to life.

Hosea 6:3

So let us know, let us pursue to know Yahweh. His going forth is as certain as the dawn, and he will come to us like the rain; like the spring rain waters the earth.

This is a wonderful appeal from a very emotional Hosea. He now moves from a negative assessment of idols to a positive revelation of God.

Hosea employs the cohortative verb to exhort his fellow countrymen to return to God. With the exhortation to knowledge comes an example of what might be known.

In the first sentence, Hosea attempts to move his audience to re-enter their relationship with God.

1. He first says, 'let us know', and then more accurately, 'let us pursue to know'. He does this because in this life we will never fully know God; that full knowledge waits until the next life.
2. The verb to know is YADHA, intimate personal knowledge of another. This is relationship knowledge, and it is the requirement for all believers in human history.
3. RADAPH means to pursue, to follow closely with the purpose of securing. Isaiah 51:1 uses it to describe the pursuit of righteousness, a very similar thing.
4. The pursuit of a relationship with God is a lifelong endeavor - you will never actually arrive in this lifetime. A finite mind cannot ever fully comprehend the infinite God.

5. But Hosea tells us the right thing. That is, to continue to pursue God, to maintain our relationship with Him through knowledge.

Next Hosea turns to an attribute of God, and illustrates that attribute. In other words, Hosea attempts to show why God is worthy to be known.

The attribute of God that Hosea concentrates on is faithfulness, summarized in the term 'going forth'. This Hebrew word is MOTSA, and it concentrates on the activity of a person. Here, it speaks of God's interaction with man.

What Hosea says is that God's interaction with man is absolutely faithful and sure.

God is Immutable (unchangeable)

1. This is the perfection of God as applied to His own temperament.
2. Temperament is defined here as the manner in which God thinks and expresses Himself.
3. A person with a volatile temperament is always changing what they think and how they express themselves.
4. God never changes in any way or for any reason.
5. Perfection and infinity together imply that God never has a need to change.
6. Immutability means that God is not growing or improving in any way.
7. You cannot improve upon perfection.
8. Human beings must change in order to grow spiritually; because of our finite and imperfect natures we change. Change for the better is not wrong with reference to humans.
9. Scripture references to Immutability

Ps 102:27, "But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Mal 3:6, "I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

God is Faithful

Because God never changes, He is unfailing in everything that He does for mankind.

He is never going to change His mind about us or what He has done for us.

He is never going to change in His essence, capabilities, or attributes.

This means that we can always depend on Him.

This should give us confidence when we go to Him in prayer, because we know that His policy, His thinking, His very essence never changes.

Illustration: people change. Some individuals you never know how to interact with because they are always changing.

Change in human beings can be good. But God is already perfect and never has to change.

Scripture.

Psa 57:3, "He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; God sends His love and his faithfulness.

Psa 86:15, "But you, O lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Psa 108:4, "For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Lam 3:23, "They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Illustration: the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32.

Hosea's illustration is the spring rain that waters the earth.

The Holy land had a pretty consistent annual weather pattern. For eight months out of the year it was dry, this was April through November; for four months there was a rainy season - December through March.

The spring rains are the ones later in the rainy season. They make it muddy and wet for the planting of crops.

This illustration is especially appropriate, because it has to do with logistical grace. The spring rains were a necessity for the annual crops and the food that the people would eat throughout the year.

So the weather pattern was a perfect illustration of the faithfulness of God. This is part of Hosea's exhortation for the people of Israel to get to know God. You can depend on Him.

This also contrasts well with idols, on whom they could not depend.

Now Hosea turns to the character of the people, which he will contrast with that of God.

Hosea 6:4

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your virtue is like a morning cloud, and like the dew which goes away early.

The question is whether the people of the two Jewish nations emulate God's faithfulness.

First there are two rhetorical questions, one addressed to each of the Jewish nations. Each is the same: What shall I do with you?

God knows what He should do with them, but they do not. So the purpose of the question is to introduce to them the idea that God is thinking on this subject, and that maybe if He is, then they should be as well.

Then comes the Divine evaluation of their character, and it does not look good.

The one character trait that God concentrates on here is hesed, or virtue love. HESED is the Hebrew word that describes the application of virtue in mercy. It describes the outcome of pure motive. HESED is a major theme of this book and especially of this chapter. God has HESED for Israel and Judah, but what do they have for Him? The HESED of Israel and Judah is characterized by natural phenomena.

The first natural phenomena is the morning cloud. Illustration: San Francisco fog.

The second is the morning dew which goes away early.

In both cases, it is something that looks good, but does not actually do anyone any good.

A little sunlight and it is all over and gone. A little undeserved suffering, and they throw their relationship with God to the wind, and go back to the idol worship. Yet during all this time, God is faithful to them.

Hosea 6:5

Therefore I have hewn into pieces by the prophets;
I have killed them by the words of my mouth.

The combination word AL-KEN is the Hebrew equivalent of "therefore". It comes to a conclusion based on what evidence has gone before.

The immediate context of this verse is the last half of verse four. The virtue of Israel is exceptionally weak; it falters under the least adversity.

On this basis of this weakness of character, God has hewn this nation into pieces by means of the prophets.

The qal perfect verb denotes that the hewing is in the past, that it is completed action.

The verb itself, HATSABHTI, envisions a strong man, with great rippling arms and sweaty brow, laboring in cutting stone or mining. The nation of Israel is the stone; the prophets the hewers. They use words for tools, and the power of the Spirit for muscle.

Israel is cut to pieces by the teaching of the prophets; their idolatry makes them an easily cuttable rock.

The parallel statement is this: 'I have killed them by the words of my mouth.'

This is the more direct statement of the two. HARAGETEM is the qal perfect again, this time the verb means to kill, and to do so in battle. That is the primary function. From it comes a figurative meaning, as here.

God has not actually killed Israel yet, but He has done so with His words. Those words have been spoken, but they have not yet come to pass. Yet when God speaks such words they are certain to do so, and the death of Israel is certainly set in the Divine decree.

This is a fascinating prelude to the keystone verse of Hosea's ministry. It reveals the final discipline of Israel as being a part of the divine decree. It shows that discipline approaching ever nearer, like LeFanu's sheeted ghost in 'O Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad.'

As the discipline approaches, God once more reveals His desires for His chosen nation, and that desire is a relationship.

Hosea 6:6

For I delight in virtue love, and not sacrifice; and knowledge of God instead of whole burnt offerings.

The first verb is HAPHETS, and its meaning reveals a sensual and emotional response to stimuli.

It is used of sexual delight for both men and women, and for matters and things that are fun to do. It is pleasure of any kind, and is the basis for many systems of motivation.

It is in the qal perfect, which here reveals a principle of God's nature. This verse reveals God's very soul.

The object of God's delight is H.ESED - virtue love and the sum of human virtue in every expression of character. H.ESED is the revelation of motivation as it extends from the complex of thought in the soul. And God delights in this.

The converse of H.ESED is ZABBAH, the actual slaughter of the sacrificial animals. The picture here is the actual act of sacrifice. God does not delight in the acts of sacrifice. He created the animals, too. They, too are the objects (thought lesser) of His pleasure, and in sacrifice they are destroyed. God does not take pleasure in that, nor does he delight in just the act.

The Jews had gotten to the point where the ritual system meant absolutely nothing to them; where they just went through the motions, without the slightest thought of the representation.

And yet the sacrifices of the ritual system were magnificent representations of Bible doctrine. The rituals taught many aspects of Divine character and interaction with sinful mankind.

The ritual system was an ingenious way to teach Bible truth, and it was never designed for just going through the motions in order to please God.

Going through the motions was a part of idolatry, but it was not any part of the plan of God. The idolaters perceived going through the motions as a way to please the idol and soothe his wrath, and bring his blessing.

Going through the motions is anti-relationship, and is a philosophy that keeps its adherents ignorant of the person of God.

The second half of the parallel statement is similar, but brings its own distinctions.

YADHA is the intimate kind of relationship knowledge that God earnestly desires. He wants His people to have a knowledge of Him.

the converse of YADHA is again a part of the ritual system: it is the whole burnt offering, the ME'OLOTH. But the idea again is relationship, and so it has been since the beginning of time.

Genesis 1:26-27, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...'

Why are we made in His image? So that we might have a relationship with Him, and bring praise to His name.

The image is the soul image, not the physical one. God is not just a really big human being.

In the garden, there was a spiritual time of day, a time when the man and the woman would meet with God. It was relationship from the very beginning. Gen 3:8, "And they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the spiritual time of the day.

All of the patriarchs and great believers of old were such because of their quality relationship with God. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Esther, Rahab - all are great because they know Him and reflect His greatness in their own lives.

The ten commandments are based on relationship with God, Ex 20:1-3, "Then God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no others gods before Me.

All of the covenants to Israel were based on the precept that they must function in the framework of relationship with God.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 says it best, "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, also that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlet bands on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The content of this verse is quite valid in the church age. Never get means mixed up with substance.

The means is the ritual system, or in our dispensation the study of the written word.

The substance is a dispensational constant, that is, it is valid at all times in human history. The substance is relationship with God.

We must never ritualize relationship with God. To ritualize that is to trivialize it. God never intended for something so personal to be institutionalized or monopolized in any way.

The means are there for a reason, and are to be employed to maximum advantage. But the means are never going to be the substance, and God is never, ever pleased just by your 'doing' the means.

Hosea 6:7

But they like Adam trampled a covenant; there they acted treacherously against me.

The conjunction waw shows that this verse continues the thought of the preceding. Since the thought of this verse contrasts the preceding, we translate the waw as an adversative - "but".

The subject of the sentence is HEMMAH, "they", a reference to the Jews.

The Jews are made the object of a comparison with Adam by the preposition KE, but the comparison is not a flattering one.

The point of comparison is 'ABHERU BHERITH "have transgressed a covenant.

The word for transgress is 'ABHERU. It depicts a stream passing through a pasture, cutting a deep course, or an army cutting through a nation, leaving a well worn path behind (or even a passage of destruction, like Sherman's march through Georgia.

The covenant can be any of the covenants between God and Israel, but is specifically Adam's covenant in Eden.

The covenant is one of the least understood of Biblical phenomena; too many theologians have failed to understand the grace aspect of all the covenants to man.

In any covenant, God agrees to apply His grace to a person or group of persons.

The basis for the covenants to all but Adam is belief in Jesus Christ. Adam did not have this requirement because before the fall he did not require a savior.

To illustrate one from our civilization, Abraham's covenant will suffice.

Abraham believed in God, and thus could enjoy the covenants that God gave to him. His belief made him eligible.

Abraham's circumcision was a post-covenant command, designed to remind him of the relationship that he had with God, and how it had brought him to the point of maturity.

But Adam was prohibited from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And when he did eat, he trampled the covenant which God had made with him.

The grace part of Adam's covenant was the trees in the garden. He could eat from and enjoy any of them, and they were great! But the one tree represented Satan's plan; from that he could not eat.

The word BERITH itself comes from the word "to eat", BARATH. It harkened to the time when those who were making a covenant would eat a meal together to show outwardly that they were at peace over the matter,

Psalm 23:5, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

Gen 31:54-55.

Indeed, today most weddings have a rehearsal dinner, which is a throwback to the wedding feast of Biblical times. That feast represented the covenant between the two families.

Furthermore it was customary to sacrifice an animal when making a covenant, so that it was considered an agreement in the sight of God. Thus the phrase came about, "to cut a covenant".

Any covenant with God had one requirement: relationship with Him, the maker of the covenant. But all covenants are gracious - they are offered freely and their blessings are truly free. The personal rejection of God results in the rejection of the person by God, Deut 29:10-28.

The covenants did not require obedience - see Hosea 6:6. The grace disposition always preceded anything that Israel had done. The blessings were not given as rewards for past obedience, nor as

bribes for future. They were given in love and grace.

Now Adam trampled on his covenant with God by choosing relationship with the woman over relationship with God; and so he was ejected from the garden and its wonderful fruit.

Israel in the same way has trampled the grace blessings which they had from God.

They had the land, and they were God's chosen nation on that land.

They were the recipients of the Davidic king.

And in spite of all of this grace, they rejected a personal relationship with God for one with idols.

Our verb 'ABHERU is in the perfect tense, showing a state of completed action. The trampling is finished - the dust has settled - it is almost too late.

The remainder of the verse further describes the nature of the trampling. The adverb of place, SAM, points the area in which the treachery took place - "there", meaning, the covenants.

Their action is treacherous, from the verb, BAGEDHY. It is a description of an adulterer or one who is treasonous against his own country.

The target of treachery is God, as portrayed by the first person singular preposition bhi - "against me".

Hosea 6:8,9

Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with bloody footprints. And as a gang member waiting, so a band of priests murders on the way to Shechem; surely they have committed an act of premeditation.

Gilead was a region and not a city. This is a figure of speech that has to do with collection. Hosea calls this region a city because the criminal element had concentrated there and made a headquarters out of it.

The region is the narrow strip of land immediately east of the Jordan river, running north-south from the sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. It extends into the Transjordan just ten or fifteen miles. The area is marked by rough terrain, with rocky defiles and steep ravines covered by thick thorny vegetation. In other words, the perfect outlaw hideaway. There was an important land route through here that went from Damascus to Jerusalem, and the outlaws took advantage of many travellers.

The participle PO'ALE and the noun 'AWEN combine together to make "evildoers". 'AWEN means "trouble" "wickedness" or "evil". In Hosea, it even has a connection with idolatry, and that connection is also with Gilead. Hosea 12:11, "Is there idolatry in Gilead? Surely they are worthless." In other words these criminals are also idolaters, and in fact the idolatry is the source of their criminal behavior.

The region of Gilead is "tracked with bloody footprints." The roads and trails throughout the region are blood-soaked. This is a way to make clear the sheer volume of crime there. Murder and violence are commonplace events. We say it in the same way - "the bloody streets of Denver".

The terror of violent crime is not confined to Gilead, nor to the hoodlums who headquarter there. It is happening near Shechem, just a few miles from the capital town. Shechem is a big town about ten miles from the capital of Samaria. The road in between has been menaced by a gang of priests, who are murdering for the sake of murder.

The priests definitely commit murder. It is the Hebrew word RATSAH, which describes the act of premeditated murder, and nothing else.

They wait intensely for someone to come along; they can hardly wait to murder. The piel stem of the verb to wait is KHEH.AKE. This is in the infinitive construct, so it reveals the action as it takes place. This is a dramatic portrayal of the waiting period before the crime, and it reveals premeditation and lust motivation for murder. They do not murder for money, but for murder itself.

Hosea makes an issue out of premeditation. First in the waiting, and second in the word zimmah. zimmah normally describes planning and deliberation of any kind. Here it definitely refers to premeditation.

Premeditation is absolutely necessary to prove that a murder has taken place.

- "Homicide is a person's killing of another person, and murder is a homicide done unlawfully and with malice aforethought.
- Numbers Chapter 35 is the important chapter on murder. It defines murder and manslaughter; and procedures for conviction.
- In that chapter, there is a clear and repetitive description of malice aforethought. Did the

killer intend to kill? If there is intent, then it is murder.

The description in Hosea 6:9 shows a gang of priests waiting eagerly for someone to come along the road. Their killing is done for the sake of killing; for the thrill and adrenalin rush of killing. He ironically points out that these men are certainly wrong according to the Mosaic Law, and yet knows that no one cares anymore.

So in these two verses Hosea has made it clear that crime, and violent crime is rampant in the land, and that it is the result of idolatry, both general and specific.

This serves to contrast with verse six, which concentrates on virtue. These verses describe the treacherous dealings of verse seven, and show how very far the people of the Northern kingdom are separated from virtue.

Hosea 6:10,11

In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel has defiled itself. Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you in my returning the captivity of My people.

Differing fates are now revealed for the Northern and Southern kingdoms.

Verse ten reveals the fate of the Northern kingdom.

There were two categories of defilement for Israel.

1. First was the defilement of a person, place, or thing for health reasons. Defilement required quarantine and separation.
2. Second was the spiritual defilement of a person, place, or thing, so they were of no use to God.

The nation of Israel is the latter. It has defiled itself, and so is of no further use to God.

The reason for their defilement is fornication. Not fornication among men, but specifically fornication from God in the form of idolatry.

This idolatry is found in the house of Israel. This may be a reference to the royal house of the Northern Kingdom, but at least it means the people of the kingdom.

God finds this a horrible thing, from SHA`AR. This describes something that is inedible or unpalatable. It is something like refrigerator

surprise. "I wonder what is in this tupperware - BLECCH!" But here it is more. It is something so gross that you do not even desire to look at it. It is truly horrid.

Verse eleven goes on to the Southern Kingdom.

Here there is something to startle. The discipline extends to Judah, and the harvest is a bloody one.

Notice that God returns His people to captivity. The old captivity was in Egypt. The new one will be in Babylon.

God returns Judah to captivity for much the same reasons. The harvest is one of slavery.

There is a subtle play on words here that is worth bringing out. It is SHUBHI SHEBHUTH.

The infinitive construct of SHUBH, "to return" is the first part. It reveals an action in the act, and is much similar to the English gerund. It is "returning".

The noun construct of SHABBAH is surprisingly unrelated, but it makes a nice play on words - SHUBHI SHEBHUTH

Hosea Chapter Seven

Hosea 7:1,2

And the iniquity of Ephraim and the evil deeds of Samaria were revealed in my healing of Israel, for they work falsehood; the thief enters in, bandits raid outside, and they do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds are all around them; they are before My face.

God attempted to heal Israel through discipline.

Hosea 6:1, "Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.

God's discipline was motivated by love, as it always is.

God's discipline was appropriate - just the right set of circumstances so that the nation of Israel would return to Him, and share His holiness.

Yet the Northern kingdom completely failed to respond to God's discipline, and this recalcitrant attitude revealed the evil underneath.

Sin is never excusable, but God is patient with sin.

God disciplines so that His grace offer might be considered and accepted.

When His discipline is rejected, well, that is bad. It denotes a rejected of grace, and ultimately of Him.

Hosea uses parallel synonyms for the reversionism (backsliding) of the Northern Kingdom.

The first is 'AON. The basic meaning of this verb is to 'bend, twist, or distort.' Through this one perceives sin as any distortion of Divine Holiness, or the character of God.

- Any failure of justice.
- Any failure of mercy.
- Any failure of grace orientation.
- Any failure of organization.
- Any failure of self-control.
- Any failure of faithfulness.
- Any failure of integrity.

RA'A is the second. It is the opposite of TOBH, and it always denotes evil, or bad as an abstract principle. But this is the concept of anything that is against the will of God, or His character. This is quite synonymous with 'AON.

Ephraim is a synonym for Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Samaria was its capital.

These nations work falsehood. That is, they weave falsehood into the fabric of their lives.

- As businessmen, they cheat their clients.
- As taxpayers, they cheat their government.
- As landowners, they cheat their neighbors and move the boundary stones.
- As spouses, they cheat on their husbands and wives.
- As living souls, they cheat themselves by justifying all their falsehoods.
- The fabric of falsehood is complex, and so much part of their everyday lives that it is an inseparable part of their character.

In Israel you are safe from crime in no place.

- The bandits raid outside, so it seems better to stay in.
- But the thieves get what the bandits do not, and you are no safer in than out.
- There is nowhere to run in this sort of discipline.

This description of rampant crime is an indictment on the people of the Northern Kingdom.

The crime is a part of the discipline portfolio that God brings on them. It is the third cycle of discipline.

Yet, they decide to live with it rather than return to God. Living with crime is better than living under the truth.

In spite of the discipline, they will not admit in their hearts that something is wrong, that the rampant crime is discipline. The word LILEBHABHAM is the inner man, or heart. It is rather like saying, "in your heart of hearts". These people are in major denial. Not at any level do they admit that they are wrong, and far from God.

This is another way to describe spiritual blindness, the result of consistent rejection of the truth and simultaneous acceptance of the Satanic counterfeits and lies.

In spite of their denial, God still remembers their evil. Nothing escapes Him, even when it may escape us through denial.

Our denial of God does not eradicate His existence. We are creatures, and we have nowhere near the power it would take to destroy God by our own words or thoughts.

The deeds of the Israelites are all around them. They can hardly move without running into the fruit of their sins.

- There are thousands of illegitimate children.
- Crime is rampant.
- A powerful foreign enemy has successfully invaded and left them helpless to defend against further incursions.
- There is hardly an honest businessman left in the land. Cheating is a way of life.
- The mentally ill invade the streets, visible reminders of the personal fruit of degeneracy in the soul.
- Every form of idolatry is available to the public, even the most heinous and criminal.
- Homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle, and publicly acknowledged as legitimate.
- Government is corrupt beyond belief.

And yet all of this is before God's face. He perceives it while they do not. The difference

comes down to honesty in the soul. "To thine own self be true.

- Practice honesty with yourself - it keeps the eyes open and well.
- Dishonesty with self leads to all kinds of problems, spiritual, physical, and mental.
- Honesty with self leads to agreement with God, and love for Him.
- Initial honesty with self is the acknowledgment of total depravity, and the need for a savior to bridge the gap to God.
- Secondary honesty with self means confessing your sins when necessary.
- Tertiary honesty with self means continuing grace orientation after salvation through spiritual growth in the Word under a prepared pastor-teacher.

Hosea 7:3

With their wickedness they make the king glad, and the princes with their lies.

In other words, the king and the princes rejoice in the wickedness and lies of their people. There can be many reasons for this, but one or two stand out.

First, because the leaders, too, are full of wickedness and lies.

Rom 1:32, "and, although they know the ordnance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Second, because when the people are slaves to the cosmic system, they are more easily enslaved by their government. This is especially worthwhile to those who tend toward power lust.

1. Those with power lust love to see losers in their nation, for it means that those losers will be all the more dependent on their government.
2. So drug addicts, sex offenders, welfare recipients, the mentally ill, alcoholics, etc. etc. are a boon to those who love to rule.
3. Those with power lust will never be tough on drugs, immorality, or crime, because those are the things that perpetuate their power. They will never support the family, but that which destroys the family.

So those who rule, and their sub-rulers rejoice in the degeneracy of their people.

Every level of government is included in this principle.

Power usually means money. But money is not always the issue for the power hungry; power is.

Hosea 7:4

They are all adulterers like an oven heated by the baker, who ceases to stir up the fire from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.

What a great description of adultery and fornication.

The oven is parallel to the sex life of the adulterer. This is evidenced by the adverb of comparison, KI. The parallel comes in two parts.

1. The oven is heated by the baker. Oven is from the Hebrew MO THANNUR - literally fire pot. The oven of the time was almost always an outdoor affair. Usually in the courtyard of the home. After the fire was lit, the baker would then go back inside.
2. The baker goes about his business, kneading the leaven into the dough. This takes a certain amount of time. But he fails to tend the fire during this time, so that when it is time to bake the dough, the fire is cold.

There is more symbolism in the kneading of the bread. The kneading portrayed here is an erotic picture - use your imagination. But - and here is the rub... as long as you knead the dough, it will not rise. Instead, the dough must be left alone for that to happen. This is a picture of the frustration and uselessness of extramarital sex.

- Doing something at the wrong time destroys the enjoyment of the right.
- Concentration on the illicit leads to distraction from the legitimate.
- Illicit sex can only be enjoyed for a moment; legitimate sex for a lifetime.
- Illicit sex destroys the fire of sexual drive; legitimate sex stokes that fire.

With the substantive adjective KULLAM Hosea indicates that the entire nation of Israel is in this category.

Hosea 7:5-7

On the day of our king, the princes became feverish with the heat of wine; He extended his hand to scoffers, for their hearts are like an oven as they draw near their intrigue; their baker sleeps all night, in the morning he burns like a flaming fire. All of them are hot like an oven, and they consume their rulers; all their kings have fallen. None of them calls on Me.

This is another series of powerful similes. These concentrate on the government of Israel, and its relationship with the people.

First, the princes get sick with the heat of wine on the king's day. The king's day does not have a parallel in the system of Levitical feasts. Therefore, this must be talking about the coronation of a new king. All of the princes become sick with wine on this day.

- There is more to this sickness than meets the eye. The word for sickness is HALAH. It usually denotes sickness or weakness due to illness, and could even here construe sickness from alcohol poisoning. But, the word also comes to mean lovesick, or sick with passion; feverish and obsessive with regard to mental things.
- The idea of fever is reinforced by the word YAHAM, which often means sexual heat. We use it of our pets now: they go into heat, and are ready to conceive. The fever is one of conception.
- The agent of conception is wine, YAYIN. This is a picture of disgruntled princes on the day of coronation. They are power mad, and so they immediately get drunk, and feverishly hatch plots against the king. In the context, these are inevitably assassination plots.

Hosea 7:8,9

Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples; Ephraim has become a cake not turned. Strangers devour his strength, yet he does not know it; gray hairs also are sprinkled on him, yet he does not know it.

And now, a rationale for the discipline of Israel. Ephraim is again synonymous with Israel, the Northern Kingdom after the split.

The Northern kingdom "mixes himself with the peoples".

The verb "to mix" is the hithpael imperfect of YITHBOLAL. The hithpael is the reflexive stem, and it shows that whatever action is done, is done to oneself. The imperfect tense reveals that this mixing oneself is an ongoing thing.

The noun AM is 'people'. Remember Hosea's second son, Lo-ammi? Well, this relates to that. Lo-ammi is "not my people".

AM is not the exact equivalent of GOYIM. GOYIM describes the unbeliever-foreigner of the age of Israel, while AM is more neutral - it describes people of all kinds, even Jews.

Here, however, there is a very strong sense of that GOYIM meaning. Just from the context it comes out well this way.

The mixing is at least of a sexual nature, wherein marriage is optional. It means that for the sake of sexual pleasure and temporary emotional satisfaction they have mixed themselves with unbelievers.

When a believer has sexual relations with an unbeliever, in or out of wedlock, they make a powerful bond. As such, it becomes very difficult to maintain their relationship with God.

Furthermore, when illicit sexual relations are had with an unbeliever, the believer has gone over to the beliefs of his or her partner with that very act.

Also, recovery from this situation is very difficult indeed, for it requires the severing of what is designed to be a very strong bond. In the case of marriage, it requires the maintenance of that bond alongside relationship with God, which is difficult as well.

But, there is no concern here with genetic matters. Unbelievers did become a legitimate part of the nation, and were accepted fully into it, as long as they believed in Jesus Christ. Moses had a non-Jewish wife. Rahab and Ruth were also non-Jewish. But in all three cases, these women were believers in Christ, and true Jews by that definition.

Next is an illustration of the statement: Ephraim has become a cake not turned.

The word for turned is the qal passive participle HAPHUCHAH. This means to 'turn over', and the picture here is more of flipping a pancake than it is of turning an object clockwise or counterclockwise. In the ancient world, the bread had to be flipped in order to bake it correctly. Furthermore, the

metaphor cannot be about mixing, because this phrase indicates that a mixing has not occurred.

A cake not turned will inevitably be burned on one side, and uncooked on the other. So also Ephraim:

- They are overdone in the area of sex and idolatry.
- At the same time, they are almost completely uncooked in the realm of relationship with God.

Verse nine follows with a statement which describes an Israel unaware of his weakness. Here, it is a kind of political blindness.

First, they are unaware that foreigners devour their strength.

- Now, the strength of Israel was never in themselves, or their military. Instead, it was in God, first and always. Many, many of the Psalms testify to this very thing.
- By intermingling with strangers, and adopting their idolatrous ways, the people of Israel sapped their strength, which was the infinite strength of God.

Second, they are unaware that their days are numbered. Their national hair is turning gray, and not too many years remain.

Hosea 7:10-12

So Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without sense; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they go, I will spread My net over them; I will bring them down like the birds of the sky. I will chastise them in accordance with the proclamation to their assembly.

These verses condemn the behavior of a client nation, when it seeks dependence on the human viewpoint strength of other nations as a replacement for dependence on God.

God says that He will thwart their attempts at alliance, and turn those attempts into deadly disasters.

Birds are generally stupid. They may be pretty, and sound pretty, but they are stupid. The term 'birdbrain' is not used in flattery.

The word YONAH describes this dove, and it is the more generic term of two that describe this bird. The other term, TOR, always describes the

turtledove of the sacrifices; YONAH is any kind of dove, even pigeons.

The dove does stupid things, even for a bird. It calls and calls its mournful cry, and attracts predators. It flies here and there in its path, but is not all that well known for its dramatic flights. In fact, the dove is known to make pretty sounds, and that is about it. It is defenseless...

So Israel makes pretty sounds to the Egyptians and the Assyrians - predator nations. And these nations are completely aware of Israel's weakness.

But there is God, looking down on this silly dove, flitting this way and that looking for strength in other nations. And being above, He is ready to drop the net on their flight at any time. A net on a dove during flight adds up to an imminent and destructive crash.

So this is the way with seeking alliance for your own strength.

But note, alliance for the sake of attaining the same goal is not prohibited and in fact reflects wisdom.

For instance, in the second world war, the United States allied with many other nations to hasten the destruction of the Axis powers. But we were headed toward that goal with or without our allies. We were glad to have them, but could have accomplished our goal without them.

But alliance from a position of weakness is another matter entirely. Especially when that alliance is a direct replacement for dependence on the strength of God.

Personal alliance can come under this same principle. Attempting to draw strength from others outside of true strength in God is a fool's errand, which can bring no good. God will drop you from the sky. This should be distinguished from the means of spiritual gifts designed for the teaching of the word.

The proclamation to their assembly is what happens after an alliance is made by government officials. The government makes the alliance, and then makes a proclamation to the people.

Often these proclamations are pure falsehood, designed to make the government look good, and thus gain support from the people. (Japan)

But in this case, God says that His discipline will be commensurate with that falsehood that they spread.

Hosea 7:13-16

Woe to them, for they have fled from Me! Destruction is theirs, for they have rebelled against Me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against Me. And they do not cry to Me from their heart when they wail on their beds; for the sake of grain and new wine they assemble themselves, they turn away from Me. Although I trained and strengthened their arms, yet they devise evil against Me. They turn, not upward, they are deceitful like a bow; their princes will fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongue. This will be their derision in the land of Egypt.

Verse thirteen is another discipline summary. It is a summary of the case of God vs. Israel.

Israel has strayed from God. So, woe to them.

God, through Hosea, employs the interjection 'OY. This is an impassioned expression of grief and despair. It is even onomapoetic, evincing the sound that comes forth involuntarily from one's mouth at the moment that the bad news is heard.

God says that they will have this experience because they have strayed, 'NADEDU. This verb holds the connotation of panicked flight. Israel flees from God because they fear a face to face confrontation. Yet, this confrontation is in reality the only thing that will save them. Lesson: never fear what is best for you. If it is best for you to go to God and confess your sins in humble repentance, then do so, and without fear.

Israel has rebelled against God. So, destruction is theirs.

The word for rebel is PHAS`U. It can describe personal or national rebellion. An interesting note: it too holds the connotation of fear. It reveals that fear always stands as the motivation for rebellion, in the negative sense of the word.

The rebellion of Israel from God has brought on SOR, 'devastation'. Always, always, this word contains the idea of violence. A violent destruction waits for this fearful, rebellious nation.

Israel speaks lies against God. So, they do not receive redemption.

This nation has gone so far in the cosmic system that they have begun to speak Satanic propaganda against God. They are now the propaganda ministers of the devil.

PADAH is the Hebrew word for redemption. In the age of Israel, this redemption would have been

both spiritual and national. The nation would have been renewed, were they not now the friends of the enemy.

Verse fourteen continues the courtroom case of God vs. Israel.

The first half of the verse has to do with the expression of pain in Israel; they are wailing and crying and howling on their beds, but none of those cries are expressed toward God.

First is the image of the people of Israel in agony and an emotionally distraught state. They are YEYELILU. This is the hiphil causative imperfect verb. It describes the crying of Israel as personal and continuous.

As this goes on, there is no repentance, no ZA`AQU, no call for help to God from the heart. In spite of their agonized state, they do not return to Him.

In place of repentance and dependence on God, the people of the Northern Kingdom have kept on sacrificing to their dead idols with grain and new wine, and in so doing turn aside from God.

One significant word: YITHGORARU. It is in the hithpolel reflexive stem, and it shows that Israel functions on its own power in order to deal with their sorrow.

The people of the Northern kingdom assemble themselves in order to deal with their problems.

In the fifteenth verse, God reminds us of all that He did for the nation, and of what He received in return.

The verse begins with two verbs in the piel stem and perfect tense. The piel stem is the stem which reveals intensity of action. The perfect tense concentrates on completion of action. So whatever specific actions these two verbs reveal, note that it is intense and complete.

The first verb is YISSARTHI. It is the very essence of divine discipline. It means to chastise, or discipline someone for their own improvement. God has done this intensely to Israel.

The second is HIZZAQTI. This means to strengthen someone or something. Here, the arm of Israel.

The arm is often a metaphor for inward or outward strength. It reveals that God intensely strengthened the Northern Kingdom.

The strengthening would be spiritual. God has faithfully provided all the spiritual logistics necessary for Israel to grow before Him, and yet they have rejected it all.

This strengthening also has its impact in the military frame of reference. Spiritual strength leads to battlefield strength. This would be appropos considering the delicate and weak situation that Israel is in at the time of this sermon from Hosea.

The discipline is the wake up side, while the grace assets are the positive side.

In spite of all this, Israel planned evil against God. This is a strong testimony against them.

The last verse of the seventh chapter concludes the discourse.

They turn, not upward.

So instead of repenting to God, they repent to Satan and thus become worse than they ever were before.

With a wrong and bitter and fearful response, they have rejected the discipline and strengthening efforts of God.

They are treacherous as a bow.

There are certain hazards that come with shooting an arrow from a bow. The energy created by drawing a bowstring can backfire on the archer and cause considerable pain.

So also Israel. They have a certain power, which can be wielded for good or bad, according to their relationship with God. They are the priest nation before God, and so before all the nations. However, if they become evil, then negative publicity ensues. Such principle holds true for every individual believer in the church age.

Their princes shall fall by the sword on account of their tongue.

This tongue should be associated with the falsehood of the previous verse. Their leadership is doomed to destruction by their own people. An adulterous nation can never handle solid leadership. If you do not have rein over yourself, you cannot be reined by your government.

So the princes die by violence.

This was their derision in the land of Egypt.

This harkens back to the 400 year slavery of Israel in Egypt.

What Hosea/God says is this: that the very reason that they were enslaved, was because of their apostasy before God. Now that same condition applies. Draw the parallel! See the light! It is back to slavery for Israel!

Hosea Chapter Eight

Hosea 8:1,2

Put the trumpet to your lips! Like an eagle the enemy comes against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed My covenant, and rebelled against My Law. They cry out to Me, 'My God, we of Israel know Thee!

Here the trumpet is a symbol of warning - the enemy is on the way. But God warns Israel to alert itself about His eminent discipline.

The enemy comes like an eagle. The enemy swoops down from above, swift and silent, surprising the victim.

The house of the Lord means Israel - and it is an interesting appellation. They are the house of the Lord, and yet also the target of His wrath. How did one become the other?

The last part of the verse tells us. They transgressed the covenant and rebelled against the Divine Law.

The point of comparison is `ABHERU BHERITH "have transgressed a covenant.

The word for transgress is `ABHERU. It depicts a stream passing through a pasture, cutting a deep course, or an army cutting through a nation, leaving a well worn path behind (or even a passage of destruction, like Sherman's march through Georgia.

The covenant is one of the least understood of Biblical phenomena; too many theologians have failed to understand the grace aspect of all the covenants to man.

In any covenant, God agrees to apply His grace to a person or group of persons. The basis for the covenants to all but Adam is belief in Jesus Christ. Adam did not have this requirement because before the fall he did not require a savior.

- To illustrate one from our civilization, Abraham's covenant will suffice.
-

- Abraham believed in God, and thus could enjoy the covenants that God gave to him. His belief made him eligible.
- Abraham's circumcision was a post-covenant command, designed to remind him of the relationship that he had with God, and how it had brought him to the point of maturity.

The word BERITH itself comes from the word "to eat", BARATH. It harkened to the time when those who were making a covenant would eat a meal together to show outwardly that they were at peace over the matter, Psalm 23:5, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." Gen 31:54-55. Indeed, today most weddings have a rehearsal dinner, which is a throwback to the wedding feast of Biblical times. That feast represented the covenant between the two families.

Furthermore it was customary to sacrifice an animal when making a covenant, so that it was considered an agreement in the sight of God. Thus the phrase came about, "to cut a covenant".

Any covenant with God had one requirement: relationship with Him, the maker of the covenant. But all covenants are gracious - they are offered freely and their blessings are truly free. The personal rejection of God results in the rejection of the person by God, Deut 29:10-28.

The covenants did not require obedience - see Hosea 6:6. The grace disposition always preceded anything that Israel had done. The blessings were not given as rewards for past obedience, nor as bribes for future. They were given in love and grace.

Israel has trampled the grace blessings which they had from God.

They had the land, and they were God's chosen nation on that land.

They were the recipients of the Davidic king.

They received the Law, God's statutes for their client nation.

And in spite of all of this grace, they rejected a personal relationship with God for one with idols.

Our verb 'ABHERU is in the perfect tense, showing a state of completed action. The trampling is finished - the dust has settled - it is almost too late. The Five Cycles of Discipline

Hosea 8:3,4

Israel has rejected good; the enemy will pursue him. They have set up kings, but not by Me; they have appointed princes, but I did not know. With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves, for the sake of being sacrificed.

Verse three is a brief and simple summary of divine discipline.

Israel has rejected good. The verb is ZANAH, which is very straightforward in meaning. It is in the qal perfect, which shows a completed state of action. What they have done is now complete.

The object of the rejection is TOBH, which is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek AGATHOS. It is good of intrinsic value. It comes to summarize every good thing that comes from God.

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, descending from the Father of lights [heavenly bodies] in whom there is no movement [as the sun in the sky] or revolutionary shadow [due to the seasons].

The astronomical language that James uses defines two types of painfully slow movement:

The movement of heavenly bodies in the sky, such as the sun or moon. Movement that is too slow to detect with the human eye, but can be detected by waiting.

The movement of shadows due to the revolution of the earth around the sun (James knew this in spite of the dispute between the pope and Galileo).

In other words, there is slow movement, even really slow movement, yet God does not change, even this slowly. In fact, He does not change at all. He is immutable. So what is good is always good, regardless of the time or season or century or even dispensation.

Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovable, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Because of Israel's rejection of good, God has appointed an enemy to pursue them. The verb pursue is YIREDEPHO. It is the basic verb for pursuit, but it is significant in that it is in the imperfect tense, which reveals a relentless kind of pursuit. This pursuit will continue until Israel repents or is caught and destroyed.

Verse four divides into two halves: one about politics and one about idolatry.

The first half comments on the way in which their leadership gets their power. They ascend by illicit means.

There are really two factors involved here: the character of the potential ruler, and the way in which he ascends to the throne.

In order for a leader to be set up by God, he must be someone of good character.

In order for a leader to be set up by God, he must come to his post by good means.

God says two things: the king became king outside of His approved means; and when the princes were appointed, He did not know. The word 'it' does not occur in the original. What God is saying here is that He was not made aware - the people did not consult Him in the selection of the prince.

Regardless of the means of bringing a ruler to the throne, whether by election, appointment, or even genetics, the main point is that the individual is prayerfully chosen.

The second half indicts Israel for their idolatry.

Hosea here uses some interesting language. They make idols with their silver and gold, so that they might be cut off.

What God says through Isaiah is that He knows the outcome of their idolatry. They make idols, and though they do not know it, their purpose is so that they will be sacrificed.

The word BERITH means to cut something. In the frame of reference of idolatry, it meant to make a sacrifice by cutting the neck of the animal. In idolatry, you cut your own neck.

Hosea 8:5-7

He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, saying, "My anger burns against them!" How long will they be incapable of innocence? For from Israel is even this! A craftsman made it, so it is not God; surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to smithereens. For they sow the wind, and they reap the storm wind. The standing grain has no growth; it yields no grain. Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up.

The calf is a recurrent theme in the history of Israel. Unfortunately it is mostly a theme of idolatry and evil.

The Bible prescribes the sacrifice of a young bull for the sin and guilt offerings, but this differs completely from a female or male calf. A bull is a sexually adult animal. Lev 4:1-5:13.

The people of the ancient world had a habit of worshipping calves. In fact, Israel developed her own system of calf worship, that had actually developed within the Israelite religion.

To the idolatrous Gentiles, calves represented fertility in the female and virility in the male. In other words their cult was sexual.

The golden calf - Exo. 32; 1 Kings 12:28; 2 Kings 10:29.

The Golden calf represents the failure of the children of Israel at the Holy Mountain of God.

It was there that they made an idol because of their impatience with Moses, who had been on the mountain with God for what they considered as too long.

Ex 32:1-4, "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron, and said to him, 'Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And Aaron said to them, 'Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it into a molten calf; and they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.'

Notice that the people have yet to receive the tablets, but they have already received the commandment against idolatry, and so they are sinning in cognizance against God, Ex 20:23.

Notice also Aaron's direct involvement in this caper. He fashioned it with his own hands.

The people recognize that without Moses they would have died in the desert, and they fear being without him.

It is their desire to replace Moses because they had made him into a god. Their idolatry was directed toward a man, and not the one true god at all.

It is ludicrous for them to think that a calf was the God who brought them up from Egypt. Their reversionism has taken them to irrationality.

In Ex 32, verses 7-14, Moses beseeches God to withhold from destroying the nation of Israel for their idolatry, and the Lord assents.

Moses then descended from the mountain with the tablets of the Law in his arms, he first hears and then sees the idolatrous feast. He is so angry that he dashes the tablets on the rocks at the foot of the mountain. They are utterly shattered. Next he melted down the golden calf, ground it into powder, and scattered the powder over the surface of the water. He made the people drink that water. All this from verses Ex 32:15-20.

Moses then turns to Aaron, whom he left in command before he went up on the mountain. Aaron's reply is one for the books.

Exodus 32:21-24, "Then Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?' And Aaron said, 'Do not let the anger of my lord burn - you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.'

- Aaron first attempts to blame the people for his failure in leadership.
- Second, he fabricates the story of the manufacture of the calf. He implies that the calf is from God Himself by telling of its miraculous production.
- As a memorial, the broken tablets of the law were placed inside of the ark of the covenant. In spite of this failure, the covenant would continue, covered by the mercy seat of God.

There was calf worship in the time of Jeroboam the first, 1 Kings 12.

1 Kings 12 chapter describes the split of Israel into two kingdoms, Judah in the South and the rest of the tribes in the North. The split came about because of the hard core attitude of Rehoboam, king over all the land. The North revolted because of him.

When the North split off, Jeroboam was faced with a very difficult problem: Jerusalem was the center

of worship for all of Israel, and due to the rebellion of his tribes there was little chance for his people to go there.

His solution was to manufacture two golden calves - one to place at Dan and the other at Bethel. They were designed to be just like the one calf that the children of Israel worshipped in the wilderness. Obviously, this was an evil policy, and the result was horrible.

Between Jeroboam and Hosea's time, the worship of calves evolved more into the pagan paradigm. It had become a thoroughgoing pagan ritual, with no basis at all in relationship with Yahweh.

God has rejected the calf of Israel - it is an idol, and He never tolerates idolatry.

The calf of Israel was made by human hands - how could it now be an object of worship? The worship of created things is really quite ridiculous. "I made it, and now I will worship it." It would be the exact equivalent if God decided to bow down and worship any human being. Idolatry often seems neat, and even rational - but it is not - not at all, not ever. The rationality is only a veneer, and this is true for all forms of idolatry.

The calf of Samaria will surely be broken to smithereens.

The Hebrew noun SHABAB is quite difficult to research. It has little to go on but the context of a couple of verses, Hosea 8:4 and Job 18:5. From what scholars can gather, it comes from an older word, which means to hew, or chop, as with an axe.

In our context, "smithereens" works because it denotes the utter destruction of something to the point where it is atomized.

In Job, the frame of reference is fire, and so 'spark' would be the working translation there.

This is identical to what happened with the golden calf in the wilderness. It was reduced to powder by the decree of Moses.

Sowing the wind and reaping the storm wind (it is not literally a whirlwind) are references to the law of volitional responsibility. It means that if you sow evil you will reap divine discipline.

Topic: The Law of Volitional Responsibility

People who choose for God are blessed; those who choose against Him suffer.

The Law of Volitional responsibility is well documented by Scripture.

Job 4:8-9, "As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.

Prov 11:18, "The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

The deceptive wages are the result of bad decisions.

The deceptive wages shortchange the work of sin, making sin never worth it.

Prov 22:8, "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

Hosea 8:7, ""They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up.

Hosea 10:12, "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

2 Cor 9:6, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Gal 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

James 3:18 "Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

The law of volitional responsibility is a built in function of divine discipline (see below). It is a law as universal as gravity, and no less impressive in its effects.

The law of volitional responsibility can be summed up in the phrase, "You will reap what you sow." This means that the seeds that you plant in bad decisions will grow up to cause suffering in your life.

In the law of volitional responsibility, the suffering is always appropriate to the original bad decision.

- If the decision is in the realm of finance, then you will suffer financially.

- If the decision is in the realm of romance, then you will suffer romantically.
- If the decision is in the realm of social life, then you will suffer socially.
- If the decision is in the realm of your chosen profession, then you will suffer professionally.

In the law of volitional responsibility, bad decisions, like crime, never pay.

You never 'get away' with a bad decision.

You never slip a fast one by God, even on a small scale.

In the law of volitional responsibility, good decisions never go unnoticed by the omnipresence of God.

There will always be a difference between right and wrong. Always to eternity.

Choosing right over wrong will always be important.

"The standing grain has no growth; it yields no grain. Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up.

There is no growth to the standing grain. The grain stalks have stopped growing. This is a description of famine, and is described in the first cycle of discipline, Lev 26:19.

If the grain does yield, the enemy comes and wolfs it down. This is a description of the first cycle of discipline, Lev 26:16. These two cycles are inverted by God, and it shows that they are happening all at once.

The qal imperfect verb YIBHLA`UHU describes a swallowing that is a wolfing or gulping down. It is the ingestion equivalent to vomiting.

The imperfect tense of this verb describes something that happens repetitively over time. If the grain grows up, it is then always swallowed by the enemy. It makes planting a crop a really hopeless endeavor. C. Both of these cycles of discipline are signs of displeasure from God. If they happen, the nation should accept the warning.

Hosea 8:8-10

Israel is swallowed up; they are now among the nations like a vessel in which no one delights. For they have gone up to Assyria, like a wild donkey all alone; Ephraim has hired

lovers. Even though they hire allies among the nations, now I will gather them up; and king princes will begin little from burden.

Verse eight begins with the same verb as verse seven, this time in the niphil passive perfect NIBHELA`.

These two verbs occur back to back in the Hebrew text, and this for reasons of emphasis. The enemies of Israel swallow their grain; and they will swallow Israel.

The subject of the verb is Israel; they will receive the action of this niphil passive.

This time the verb is in the perfect tense, showing the absolute certainty of their fate. It is set in the future, and in the divine decree; it is set in stone.

And again, it is a quick, wolf-like kind of swallow. This is like when we give special treats to our dogs. They are swallowed so fast there is no real appreciation of taste.

The swallowing of economic prosperity by the enemy precedes the swallowing of the nation by God. We now stand on the verge of a trade war with Japan, and one which we may not win. If so, then we are in a cycle of discipline, and stand in danger of being swallowed by God.

"They are now among the nations like a vessel in which no one delights." The best way to describe this is by analogy. Israel is the Christmas fruitcake among the nations. No one likes them, but they keep showing up anyway. This portrays the solicitous way in which Israel, from their position of weakness, kept on attempting to ally with all of the foreign powers. But what can the weak offer to the strong?

"For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild ass going alone.

The qal active participle of BADAD signifies here the lonesome nature of Israel. They are all alone, going up through the desert to Assyria in order to contract an alliance. Also an animal which was normally a beast of burden was going alone - without human guidance. In the same way, Israel was going without divine guidance.

It is significant that they go alone, for in reality they go without God.

The ass was a beast of burden since the earliest times. But a wild ass was totally useless. That is the picture here. A totally useless animal, going up to Assyria for a totally useless reason.

"For Ephraim has hired lovers for itself.

God says that Ephraim's alliances are the equivalent of prostitution.

In the analogy, God is the wife, and Ephraim the husband, while Assyria and Egypt are the prostitutes.

When they should be trusting in God for their might, they are instead buying might from their enemies. This is a foreign policy which cannot possibly work.

So God, like the Aurora police department, is putting the face of Israel, the solicitor, on the front page of the Samaria Tribune.

There is no true satisfaction in fornication or adultery. There is no true satisfaction in any form of illicit sex. But, you must be exceptionally stupid to pay for it. In essence you are paying for something that can never satisfy you.

"Even though they hire allies among the nations, now I will gather them up.

Gathering is another way of describing the fifth cycle of discipline. It comes from the piel imperfect verb 'AQABETSEM.

This is a harvest word. It means to grasp the heads of grain, and pull them off, and collect them in a basket.

It is quite ironic that in essence Israel is hiring human allies to protect themselves from divine discipline. Of course it will not work: God is going to gather them anyway.

The verb is in the piel stem, which describes an intensity of action. God is REALLY going to gather them.

Since it is the imperfect tense, the action is ongoing - the harvest open-ended.

" and king princes will begin little from burden .

The hiphil causative denotes the personal involvement of the king and princes of Israel in this beginning. The verb means that they will gain little from this alliance - that it will be more of a hindrance or burden than a help.

The burden must also be considered a result of the king and princes. In essence they are their own burden.

The burden itself is the disastrous policy of reliance on alliance instead of God.

Hosea 8:11-13

Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, they have become altars of sinning for him. Though I wrote from him ten thousand precepts of My law, they are regarded as a strange thing. As for My sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice the flesh and eat it, but the Lord has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their iniquity, and punish them for their sins; they will return to Egypt.

This is God speaking through Hosea; the Words are His.

"Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, they have become altars of sinning for him

The altars for sin are of course altars for specific idolatry, the direct worship of demons.

Every one of those altars that they made resulted in even more sin.

What God says is that if you make something for the express purpose of sin, it multiplies sin. You make something that has potential for sin, and you know it, then you will sin.

Any number of things may be equivalent to this in our own nation.

Prostitution and pornography and drug trafficking are all examples of this.

"Though I wrote from him ten thousand precepts of My law, they are regarded as a strange thing.

God has communicated His Law clearly and accurately and thoroughly. He has inculcated them with it, so that there could be no mistake about it.

Yet, it is a foreign thing to the people of Israel. They consider it with disdain - they think it out of fashion and unpopular.

Hosea 8:14

For Israel has forgotten his maker and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities, but I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume its palatial dwellings.

This is another prediction of final discipline for both Israel and Judah.

The rationale: they have forgotten their maker, who is the only one and true God. Do not forget your maker!

Israel builds palaces...

- It is interesting to note that Israel did this at a time of such royal turmoil.
- When the king is in charge, and he builds a greater palace for himself, it is self-glorification.
- This is the product of power lust, and utter selfishness. This is the product of one who has no interest in the discharge of public responsibility.

Judah has multiplied fortified cities...

Having no army, Israel could not do this.

But Judah still has her army intact, and her people prepare for the Assyrian invasion.

However, a principle: no amount of preparation can stave off divine discipline. Such discipline cannot be averted.

You can protect all of your investments and diversify them in a broad manner, but the Lord knows them.

You can build your home into a fortress against crime and criminals, but God knows how to penetrate it. 5. So the palaces are consumed, and the threat remains to the fortresses. The death of Israel is a warning to Judah.

Hosea Chapter Nine

Hosea 9:1-6

Do not rejoice, O Israel, with exultation like the nations! For you have played the prostitute, forsaking your God. You have loved the hire of a prostitute on every threshing floor. Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them, and the new wine will utterly deceive them. They will not remain in the Lord's land, but Ephraim will return to Egypt, and in Assyria they will eat unclean food. They will not pour out libations of wine to the Lord, their sacrifices will not please Him. Their bread will be like mourners' bread; all who eat of it will be defiled, for their bread will be for themselves alone; it will not enter the house of the Lord. What will you do on the day of the appointed festival and on the day of the feast of the Lord? For behold, they will go because of destruction; Egypt will gather them up, Memphis will bury them. Weeds will take over their treasures of silver; thorns will be in their tents.

God prohibits the people of Israel from rejoicing. The kind of rejoicing is idolatry.

The verb SHAMAH reveals different shades of the rejoicing theme.

- It can mean the rejoicing that is a part of everyday life. In love and relationships; in work and play; in personal triumph.
- It can mean the rejoicing that is a part of a healthy relationship with God, in praise and worship.
- It describes the illegitimate rejoicing of sin and idolatry.

Since the rejoicing here is associated with the exultation of the unbeliever nations, this use must fall into the third category.

Furthermore, the reason for the prohibition is the adulterous activities of Israel - something that would only fall into the third category.

As the harlot, Israel has left her husband, who is God. God was and is the greatest husband who has ever lived, and she left him.

Remember, Hosea knows exactly how God feels. He has lost his wife to prostitution... that is the reason that his sermons have so much power, and vitality. God made Hosea great, and yet great was not good enough for degenerate Israel.

Israel prefers the life and wages of prostitution to a normal life and honest wages.

The threshing floor reveals irony - it is a place where honest wages are earned through the hard work of the harvest. The life of the prostitute is really, really rough. Her clientele is universally scummy, and the profession brings disease, mental illness, and total hopelessness. The prostitute with a heart of gold is an absolute myth, in spite of the modern media and entertainment industry. Anyone who dehumanizes sex in such a way is a total loser whose only hope is Christ.

The threshing floor is also where the wheat is separated from the chaff, and so it goes with divine discipline.

The second verse reiterates the economic failures that go with the first two cycles of discipline.

The threshing floor and wine vat will not feed them. These are two of the major production areas of the ancient world. The threshing floor for the food, and the wine vat for the drink. The second is more of a luxury.

Furthermore, the new wine will utterly deceive them.

The verb YEKACHESH is in the piel imperfect.

Its base meaning is deceive.

The piel stem adds the idea of intense deception.

The imperfect tense reveals a continuous action.

The new wine is the bad stuff. It means that they are out of the good old wine, and that they are way too addicted and degenerate to wait for any more wine to age. As long as it has alcohol, it is good. These are the kinds of degenerates that populate the northern kingdom.

The third verse recalls the return to Egypt and slavery theme.

What is new here is the association of Egypt with Assyria, so that it is clear that Assyria will be the place of their exile.

They will eat unclean food in Assyria - they will be totally unable to practice the Law while they are away. Once cut off from God, there will be no turning back. They will be separated from their food just as effectively as they will be separated from their temple, and the worship that is done there.

However, do not fear. God always rewards positive volition with the truth. He simply communicates here that the truth will not longer have a daily presence; that they will have to develop positive volition anew.

The fourth verse continues the theme of inability.

Israel will not pour out wine to Yahweh - the drink offering.

They will not please Him with their sacrifices - the blood and burnt offerings.

The only purpose for bread will be physical sustenance, and not to provide shewbread in the Holy place, or grain offerings, or in the feast of unleavened bread.

In other words, the word of God will not be a part of their lives.

Part of this will be the bitterness of the slaves and survivors of the final discipline. They will not have anything to do with a God who would allow this.

The other part of it will be the unavailability of the elements due to abject poverty.

They will have the remembered word, and always the chance to go back on positive signals.

But for centuries this nation has been the receptacle for the word of God. They have been the basis for evangelism and the teaching of the Word. And now the Word will be foreign to them.

They will have truly become like the Gentiles, in need of the light of the word, due to its absence among them.

The fifth verse asks a rhetorical question.

When the appointed day of a feast comes, what will happen?

Israel, who has celebrated the Passover and the Tabernacles and others for more than five hundred years will suddenly have no possibility of completing the requirement.

Suddenly the full moon of passover will be a great void in their lives, and the merriness of tabernacles an emptiness.

The solemnity and relief of 'the day' - the day of atonement, will have no relief... just another day in an endless calendar of slavery and oppression.

And the sixth verse tells how they will get to this place without celebration and the word.

They will go because of destruction. The Assyrian army is about to eat their country alive, and leave little in its wake. They will go into slavery happily because the alternative is death in a barren land.

Some will actually flee to Egypt, and die in the city of Memphis.

And in the emptiness left behind, the weeds and thistles grow, taking over what was left of a great country.

Hosea 9:7-9

The days of THE punishment have come, the days of THE retribution have come; Israel will continually know this! The prophet is a fool, the inspired man is demented, because of the grossness of your iniquity, and because your hostility is so great. Ephraim was a watchman, a prophet with my God; the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways; hostility is in the house of his God. They have personally gone deep, they are utterly corrupt in depravity; He will continually remember their iniquity; he will continually punish their sins."

The two synonyms for divine discipline are PEQUDAH and HASSILUM.

PEQUDAH means literally, 'visitation'. However, in the frame of reference of divine discipline, it means punishment. It shows a just God making a visit to a fallen Israel. The definite article bears an ominous message: this is THE visitation. And notice: you would normally be thrilled to receive a visit from God - but NOT if you are in reversionism.

HASSILUM is literally 'recompense' or 'reward'. It portrays someone receiving their just reward for a job well done. But in the frame of reference of discipline, this is another matter - retribution works perfectly. The definite article is present here as well, and also quite ominous. This is THE retribution.

The qal perfect verb B'U reveal that the final discipline is now a reality. This was the sermon on the very day of destruction. The perfect tense reveals a completed action. Final discipline is not near, it is NOW.

The qal imperfect verb YADH'U concentrates on continual intimate knowledge.

Here, the imperfect tense unveils the continuous knowledge of Israel during their exile. Those who survive the final discipline will remember it vividly for all their days.

The kind of knowledge is intimate - this is the knowledge of trauma - the knowledge of bad dreams and waking nightmares from which there is little relief.

The prophet is a fool - AWIL - the big word of the book of Proverbs.

The Proverbs often describe the fool. The word itself comes from the verb which records the laugh of the hyena and birds of prey.

It therefore indicates the person in question makes no more sense than the laugh of the hyena.

The verb is almost universally connected with sin, and thus sin results in foolishness and even more sin.

The prophet is only a so-called prophet. Many men were appointed to the office during this time, yet few of them actually had the gift of God. Yet the second part of the parallelism records the gift.

The man of the spirit is mad.

ISH HARUACH is the man of the Spirit. From the power of God the Holy Spirit the prophet prophesies. This is the one with the gift of prophecy.

MESUNNA` records another animal sound, the whinny of the camel, or the coo of the pigeon. It indicates not only foolishness but madness. 6. The reason for the foolishness and madness is the great degeneracy of Israel, and her animosity toward God. Degeneracy among the people is often followed by degeneracy among her religious leadership. Without the truth, they react in the worst ways.

"Ephraim was a watchman, a prophet with my God

This was the former state of the Northern Kingdom - they were watchmen and prophets with God.

They were zealous watchmen for the word of truth. They guarded its precepts, and held onto it with great integrity.

They were also prophets, proclaiming the truth of God to the nations. They were God's great ambassadors.

"the snare of the bird catcher is upon all of his ways.

The snare is a bird trap, a loop or a net that is designed to catch a bird for the purpose of food.

The bird catcher is the slyest of men, quiet and stealthy to the extreme. He is catlike and clever, quick with his snare. The bird catcher is a profession - he makes his living from the birds he catches and sells.

The bird catcher is Satan, the deceiver. His snare is temptation to sin; cosmic rationales, and counterfeit truth.

The snare is upon all of the ways of Ephraim. The people have been taken completely by his temptations.

"hostility is in the house of his God" Again, Hosea mentions animosity against God, and this time in the house of God - the temple. Even here there is hatred of God.

"They have personally gone deep, they are utterly corrupt as in the days of Gibeah;

The hiphil causative reveals the personal nature of Ephraim's involvement in the cosmic system.

The piel intensive reveals the intensity of their corruption.

Gibeah was a place of terrible sin, as we have already studied.

All of these have in common that they are hills, and places of demon worship. They were also signal hills, so that in sequence the alarm goes from south to north. It makes the picture of a warning going from Judah to Israel. Hey! Wake up! You are degenerate!

Gibeah had quite a history for the Jews, even before the separation of the kingdoms.

Gibeah came to characterize the degeneracy of Israel under the Judges, and their need for greater restraint under a king. Judges 19-21 recounts a event that was paramount in degeneracy.

This remembrance is still compatible with the idea of forgiveness. The forgiveness of God was available to this nation until His justice could no longer tolerate their abuses.

To any Ephraimite who believed after this, there would still be forgiveness in salvation.

To any Ephraimite believer who confessed his sins, there would be temporal forgiveness.

And note: this remembrance and punishment is on a national basis, and not an individual one. National discipline never disables forgiveness on an individual level.

Hosea 9:10-14

I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season. But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, and they became as detestable as that which they loved. As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird - no birth, no pregnancy, and no conception! Though they bring up their children, yet I will bereave them until not a man is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them! Ephraim, as I have seen, is planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre; But Ephraim will bring out his children for slaughter. Give them, O Lord - what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

The first half of verse ten speaks in glowing terms of the initial attractiveness of Israel to God.

The attractiveness was like finding grapes in the wilderness - it was a really pleasant surprise - a totally unexpected refreshment.

Likewise, the forefathers were like the earliest fruit on a fig tree. In other words, after a long winter without fruit, the first fruit is sweetest.

The long drought or winter was the period of post-diluvian civilization which preceded Abraham, maybe a couple of thousand years of degeneracy. It was truly a long drought of virtue.

And Israel was the refreshment after the drought - and her refreshment to God was virtue.

The second half of the verse concentrates on the downfall of Israel, beginning with their idolatry at Baal Peor.

The incident at Baal-Peor is a part of the story of Balaam, and that story is worth going over.

Israel came to camp on the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho. They were on the verge of occupying the promised land after having marched for so very long.

Israel, with the help of God, had just knocked off the Amorites, a very populous group of people. When they came to Moab, the Moabites were quite intimidated by this most recent victory.

Balak the king of Moab, sent for aid to Balaam, who was a ruler in Mesopotamia at the time. Balaam was apparently a man of God, for He often communicates with the Lord, and is considered by Balak to have a great deal of impact from the Divine.

God talks to Balaam, and tells him not to go to the aid of Balak, for the people who advance on Moab are His people, and are blessed. Balaam thus refused to aid Balak, and sent Balak's envoys back to Moab empty-handed.

Rebuffed but by no means defeated, Balak then sent more distinguished envoys and more of them, insisting on the aid of Balaam, and essentially wrote Balaam a blank check for his reward. Balaam again refused to help, but told the envoys to wait for the word of the Lord, which would come to him again that night.

That night, God told Balaam he could go if the men had come to call him, but only if he could do so with faithfulness to the Word. He did not intend to do so, but he saddled up his donkey and went anyway.

On the way to Moab, Balaam's donkey was confronted three times by an angel of the Lord, and so just up and stopped and laid down. Balaam, ignorant of the presence of the angel, abused his donkey until the Lord enabled it to speak against him. Read vs. 21-35.

Again the command came from God to Balaam. So Balaam goes to Balak, and Balak is indignant that Balaam would not come before this, in spite of his grandiose offers.

But Balaam says that he will only speak to him the word of the Lord, and so he tells Balak to build seven altars and to sacrifice seven bulls and seven rams for the altar. So it is done.

In the mean time Balaam goes off to a barren hill to listen to the voice of God. And Balaam reports his faithfulness to God, and God commands Balaam to speak a certain prophecy to Balak. So he does - vv.7-10.

Balak is again indignant: this time because Balaam has pronounced a blessing and not a curse on Israel.

Balak then takes Balaam to another high place from whence he might curse Israel. Again the seven altars are built, and a ram and a bull are offered on each.

Again the prophetic word comes to Balaam, this time a blessing for Israel and a threat to those who would stand in their way. Again Balak is indignant.

Now a third time Balak took Balaam to a high place, and a third time the sacrifices were made on seven altars. The name of the place was Peor. Balaam's prophecy was identical in character to the preceding, vv. 3-9.

Balak is outraged, and Balaam has one more thing to say - vv.15-24. This is a messianic prophecy. Balaam then returns to his home in Mesopotamia. He was, by the way, one of the greatest of the true Jews.

But the people of Israel then turned against God, and fornicated with the Moabite women, and offered to the idols of this exceedingly corrupt people. God's punishment of His own people was quite severe. vv. 1-9.

"As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird; no birth, no pregnancy, and no conception!"

The glory of Ephraim is KABHAH. This describes outward splendor or riches. It is a description which makes no moral judgment, and, as we know, Ephraim was an immoral nation.

That glory will fly away like the birds - it will be gone swiftly and completely!

The reason for this flight of glory is the absence of reproduction - there will be a 'lost' generation of Ephraim, due to divine discipline.

No child-bearing, no birth, no conception.

This is placed completely out of order from normal, and the ordering is there for reasons of emphasis.

There is no conception, but if there is, the mother will miscarry.

There is no pregnancy that comes to term, but if one should, then there will certainly be a still-birth.

In other words, this is divine discipline on the reproductive cycle.

"Though they bring up their children, yet I will bereave them until they are childless. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them!

If they should give live birth, then the child will die early!

And this goes on until not a man is left.

The departure of God is tantamount to the destruction of the nation. Here Hosea compares final discipline to the departure of God.

"Ephraim as I have seen is planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre; but Ephraim will bring out his children for slaughter.

There lies Ephraim in the most pleasant of locations - it is a beautiful land! There are green plains that slope gently down to the sea...

Yet what occurs on those plains, but the very worst of crimes - the sacrifice of children on pagan altars. What bitter irony! What a contrast between creation and destruction! And it is all done in the presence of God.

And the reproduction discipline is so obviously just!

"Give them, O Lord - what will You give? Give to them a miscarrying womb and shrivelling breasts

They sacrifice their children in demonic rituals, and Hosea implores the Lord to give them what they deserve.

Miscarriages and no conception. The perfect justice.

Hosea 9:15-17

All their evil is at Gilgal; indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels. Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up, they will bear no fruit. Even though they bear children, I will slay the precious ones of their womb. My God will cast them away because they have not listened to Him. And they will be wanderers among the nations.

The word Gilgal was onomopoeitic, reciting the sound that a squeaky wheel made when it went around and around: gilgalgilgalgilgalgilgal. Its verb form meant to 'roll', or 'roll away'. It could also denote anything that was round.

Gilgal was a town in Israel down near the Jordan River, just a short ways northeast from Jericho.

It was the first military encampment of the Children of Israel in the promised land.

It was the terminus of a great victory procession that began in Shittim, 14 miles east of the Jordan, Joshua 3:1.

It was here that the twelve stones were set as a memorial to the crossing of the Jordan.

READ Joshua 4:1-7.

It was here that the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ, led the army of the angels, and revealed himself to Joshua on the night before the battle of Jericho.

READ Joshua 5:10-15.

So, it was an important place of national heritage, their Plymouth Rock. Their Smithsonian institute. People would often go to worship there, and it was even used as a seat of judgment by Saul. There was instituted a celebration of Gilgal, the thanksgiving holiday of the nation of Israel. This was held as a part of the feasts of passover and weeks.

In later years, Gilgal became a place of demon worship, a center of specific idolatry. It was a double perversion to worship Satan at this place,

as it is a double perversion to praise the Japanese at our own Smithsonian. Oh! Travesty of Justice!

The house of God is the temple, but the people of the Northern Kingdom had been unable to worship there for quite some time - generations. The reference to the house of God is therefore is more generic. Question: is your home open to anyone? Of course not. God makes it clear that Israel is no longer welcome with Him - wherever He is.

"I will love them no more; all of their princes are rebels.

This refers to the cessation of personal love from God. Naturally, God still has virtue love in the situation.

God has personal love for anyone who has doctrine in their soul. This was no longer true for the nation of Israel. Only a handful had the truth.

The rationale: the rebellion of the national leadership. The leadership of a nation reflects the national attitude. One way or another, God molds the events of the nation in order to give it the leadership it deserves. It was more than just bad luck that we got our latest president.

Interestingly enough, the leadership is also a basis for discipline.

"Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; they will bear no fruit.

The root of any tree is of great importance. From it the tree draws water and the organics and minerals that it uses for food. The root is the fuel pipeline from which it draws materials for the photosynthetic process.

If the root dries up, or is cut from the tree, the tree will die. However, this death may take some time to manifest itself.

So it is with Israel. They are dead, and they do not know it yet. This death is irreversible, and already in motion. They are past the point of no return.

Their fruit is children.

"Even though they bear children, I will slay the precious ones of their womb. My God will cast them away because they have not listened to Him. And they will be wanderers among the nations.

God will destroy the next generation.

This is because of disobedience.

They will be wanderers among the Gentile nations. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome - and many more.

Hosea Chapter Ten

Hosea 10:1,2

Israel is a lush vine; the fruit will really produce for him. According to the abundance of his fruit he has multiplied his altars; according to the richness of his land, he glorified his sacred pillars. Their heart is faithless; now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will break down their altars and destroy their sacred pillars.

The qal participle BAQAAQ is found only once in the Bible - here. The only way we know of its meaning is from this context, and from the cognate languages of the middle east.

The Arabic has a similar word, which describes the gurgling of water as it pours from a cup, and also the emptiness of the cup afterward. The vine which has this water would be lush.

This well describes the situation with Israel - they are a prosperous vine, but the water which gives them their prosperity is gurgling away to nothingness. Soon they will have no water and die out.

The vine is a common simile for Israel, Isa 5:1-10; Ezekiel 17:6ff. This is GEFEN in the hebrew.

Various vines grew in the region - gourds, grapevines, etc. However, the grapevine is the predominant basis of illustration, because everyone loved it.

The vine is a symbol of the settler, because it takes a number of years for the vine to mature and bear fruit. Thus a proclivity toward delayed gratification is necessary for the production of grapes and wine.

The fruit will really produce for him.

Fruit is the subject of the sentence, not the object, as portrayed in the NASB. The fruit of the vine produces profit when it is sold.

In this case, the lush vine produces fantastic fruit, and the fruit really brings a great profit.

The piel intensive stem of the verb YESHAWWEH reveals that the profit comes at a fast and furious pace.

God produces prosperity for this nation, and they use it to broaden the number of their idolatrous

altars, and improve upon what is already there. The industries and idolatries are really booming in Israel; booming commensurate with their material prosperity.

The prosperity came from God, and because of their good relationship with Him. This prosperity overflowed into a time of degeneracy, and continued for generations in spite of sin.

The abuse of prosperity inevitably leads to its cessation. The gurgling brook will be dried up; the vine will die; the altars will be broken down, and the pillars destroyed.

Hosea 10:3,4

Surely now they will say, "We have no king, for we do not revere the Lord. As for the king, what can he do for us?" They speak words, oaths of emptiness while making covenants; and judgment sprouts like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.

In the first verse, Hosea takes the role of Israel under final discipline. He puts words in their mouths, the words of any reasonable person under the circumstances.

This soliloquy reveals the inner workings of Hosea's mind.

He has labored for this nation for several decades, only to discover negative volition at every turn. Hosea is now talking to himself - surely the reality of the discipline will bring them to their senses.

Hosea has preached the coming discipline for so long that the nation should have been thoroughly inculcated in the possibility, and the details of the death of their nation.

Yet there is no positive response. In spite of the Divine intervention of discipline, Israel remains negative.

Some other observations from verse three.

The removal of the king was divine discipline.

However, the discipline came from their own hand - they were always assassinating them.

Even the king cannot save them from the destruction of their nation - even if they had not killed him.

"They speak words..." Anyone can speak words, but words are just words when you have no integrity. Words become something more when you keep them.

The words are just oaths of emptiness, even while cutting a covenant.

A covenant, treaty, or contract is "cut" because the two parties would customarily make a blood sacrifice on the spot. The blood sacrifice was the signature of the day. This not only solemnified the proceeding but also made recognition that it was done in the sight of God.

Making a contract was therefore an act of worship - in it you gave your word, and your solemn pledge that you were standing in imitation of His character.

But an empty oath is a blasphemy before God, and from it comes disaster.

The absence of integrity leads to the massive increase of judgment.

The word for judgment is MISHPAT. It is a regular Hebrew noun that denotes the activity of a legitimate court of law.

The Mosaic law covered both the criminal and the civil sides of law. This verse concentrates on civil law.

Civil litigation grows for a few basic reasons:

Revenge motivation - an inability to trust God to right your wrongs.

Greed - the inordinate desire for money.

An absence of personal integrity.

All three of the above reasons stem from involvement in the cosmic system, and especially bitterness against God.

An absence of trust in God leads to a necessity for another vindicator. That vindicator may be yourself, it may be the government, through legislation, or the courts, through litigation.

An absence of trust in God leads to the gain of money through wrong means.

And absence of trust in God leads to the rationalization of one's lack of integrity.

The absence of integrity may sometimes cause a need for criminal prosecution, and in the case where the absence of integrity crosses the line into criminality it is right to take legal action.

The absence of integrity, when not criminal adds fuel to the fire of unnecessary litigation.

Note, however, that this is not 'lawsuits' in the modern concept of gold-digging through the courts.

So, a couple of principles:

- Integrity eases the courts.
- An inordinate amount of litigation puts a great strain on the economy - it is the poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.

The final exhortation of Hosea to Judah is to refrain from making the oath, 'As Yahweh lives'.

What a great falsehood this was on the lips of idol worshippers. They worshipped dead idols in the house of nothingness and on a holy ground of national heritage, and yet they swore, 'as Yahweh lives'. Of course this would be a ground for any lie, because the hypocrites did not believe in the living God, and acted like He did not exist at all.

The exhortation from the ten commandments is to never take the Lord's name in vain; never use His name out of context of relationship with Him. And yet this is exactly what this oath does when it comes from the lips of unbelievers.

Hosea 10:5-8

The population of Samaria continually fears for the calf of Beth Aven. Likewise, its people will mourn for it, and its idolatrous priests continuously tremble over it, over its glory, since it has departed from it. Also, it (the glory) will cause it to be carried to Assyria as a gift to King Jareb; Ephraim will accept humiliation, and Israel will be ashamed because of his counsel. Samaria silenced, her king like debris on the face of the water. And the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; Thorn and thistle will grow on their altars, then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!"

The idolaters will fear for their object of idolatry. Remember, idolatry is a love relationship

In idolatry, you replace the love you have (or should have) for God with love for an idol, whether general or specific.

When danger comes to the substance of idolatry, there is an expression of fear from its worshippers - the thing they love is in danger.

When that thing is finally destroyed, the idolaters mourn, for they have lost something that they love dearly.

It can be sex, drugs, or any other addictive thing which stands in the category of general idolatry. It can be some kind of icon or system of demon worship. Whatever it is, it is loved.

The translation is 'population' here, for the word, SHEKHAN is in the singular, while its verb is in the plural. 'Population' fits that bill just right. The word gathers together all of the residents of a single geographical area.

Samaria is both a city and a region, and from the mention it may mean either. However, SHEKHAN seems to fit the region definition just a little bit better.

Their fear is continuous, because the Hebrew verb YAGURU is in the imperfect tense.

The imperfect tense generally denotes action which is not yet complete. In a more specific way, it also describes action which is continuous. From the context, that is the appearance here. The fear is continuous because the threat to the calf does not go away. It will be continuous until such time as the calf is carried off to Samaria.

The kind of fear is the ecstatic kind, where one loses control of one's mind in the course of fear. This is continuous, paralyzing fear.

The preposition KI is translated 'likewise'. It demonstrates the similarity between fear and mourning. Principle: the greater your fear for the loss of someone or something, the greater your mourning after it is gone. There is a big difference between honest sadness and out of control grieving.

The next verb, which describes the future time of mourning over the idol, is in the perfect tense. It describes a completed action. It is 'ABHAL.

Since this event had yet to take place in the time it was written, but it was written in the perfect tense, it is obvious that this is a prophetic future perfect.

This is certainly a prediction about the removal of the calf of Beth Aven. It will come true.

The final two clauses of the verse concentrate on the activity of the idol-priests with the calf of Beth Aven.

The verb YAGILU is first of all a paranomasia, a play on words, with YAGURU. The two verbs were chosen for their sound alike qualities. They sound alike, and in fact they are near in meaning as well. But notice that they are very difficult to

pronounce together. This makes fun of the one who fears - he is so scared that he can barely pronounce his words.

YAGILU is also in the imperfect tense, and it also denotes continuous action, this time after the calf is gone.

YAGILU normally describes an ecstatic state of rejoicing - the trembling, the waving of hands, the dancing. But here it only concentrates on the outward form, without the inward happiness. This is like saying, in a sarcastic tone of voice, "Oh, they'll tremble in happiness alright.

They tremble over it, over its glory. KEBHODHO is glory, but not in any objective virtuous sense. This word more often points to outward glory - the only real glory a golden idol could have. Their fear is outward, and it is perfect, because that is the only kind of glory that this calf of Beth-Aven has.

The glory has departed from it. The perfect tense of KI-GALAH outlines another completed action - the departure of the calf. It is as good as done.

Hosea predicts that the idol will be taken back to Assyrian as tribute to king Jareb - 'king combat'.

Chapter Five, Verse 13, "When Ephraim will see his sickness, and Judah his wound, and then Ephraim will go to Assyria and will send to King Jareb. But he will be unable to heal you, and the wound will not depart from you.

Hosea summarizes two historical events here.

1. The attempt of Menahem of Israel to win over Tiglath-Pileser in 738 B.C., as recorded in 2 Kings 15:19. Here, Menahem exacted a special tax on the wealthy to bring a treasure trove of silver to Assyria.
2. The attempt of Ahaz of Judah to win over Tiglath-Pileser in 734 B.C., as recorded in 2 Kings 16:7.
3. King Jareb is Israel's mocking nickname of Tiglath-Pileser. It means literally, 'king combat'. It was right in one sense. The Assyrian army was tough, and way tougher than either Israel or Judah.
4. Well, ultimately these bribes did not work. They delayed the destruction for a season, or a few years, but that was it.
5. The sickness here refers to the military weakness. Of course, an idol-worshipping

nation of drunks and fornicators is going to be exceptionally weak on the field of combat. So it is with Israel and Judah.

6. The bribery itself is blasphemy before the Lord. It compensates weakness with weakness. It was a human viewpoint attempt to stave off the justice of God, and it could not possible work.

"Also, it (the glory) will cause it to be carried to Assyria as a gift to King Jareb;

One of the difficulties of the Hebrew language is that the personal pronouns are used more often than in English, and it is not easy to tell its antecedent.

But, reason rules in this verse. The first personal pronoun (it) refers to the glory of the calf of Beth-Aven. The second pronoun (also it) points to the calf itself.

The glory of the calf causes it to be carried to Assyria.

The Hophal imperfect of YUBHAL designates that the glory of the calf causes the action of the verb. However, since the Hophal is the passive causative, it means that the calf also receives the action of the verb. In other words, the glory of the calf causes it to be carried away.

The verb describes a special kind of carrying. It is the carrying which takes place in a victory parade. In the ancient world, a nation would hold a great parade after their victory in war. In this parade they would carry along with them the spoils of war. This is YUBHAL.

Now there is some bitter irony here. The people of Israel made the calf, and they were responsible for its outward glory. But that same outward glory was attractive to Tiglath-Pileser when he demanded tribute from Israel, and so the glory of the calf caused it to be carried away as a gift to 'king combat'.

The upshot of the loss of the calf is humiliation and shame."Ephraim will accept humiliation, and Israel will be ashamed because of counsel

Hosea communicates this through a parallelism. Two lines, with equivalent form and similar meanings convey different shades of the same theme: humiliation.

The imperfect verb YIQAH. comes from the root LAQAH., which in this context has the shade of accepting a bribe. The imperfect tense tells us that

the action is not yet complete - it is a future possibility. Accepting a bribe is done in a sly manner, something done while looking out for a stab in the back, or with one eye out for the authorities.

The object of the verb is BASHNAH, humiliation in the sense of nakedness. This noun has the same root as the verb which appears in Hosea 2:5, "For their mother has committed adultery; the one conceiving them has acted shamefully.

- It can denote shame that comes from nakedness, or from immoral behavior.
- Observe the connection between the verb and its object noun: they will accept humiliation like a bribe. It is almost funny that Israel was trying to bribe Tiglath-Pileser...
- As the humiliation comes, they surreptitiously look from the corners of their eyes to see if anyone is looking. It is almost as though they do not think they deserve the shame!

The second clause of the parallelism has to do with their attitude toward the poor political counsel that they received from Tiglath-Pileser

- Israel will be ashamed because of his counsel.
- The verb 'be ashamed' is BOSH, a cognate of BASHNAH. It has the same connotation as before.
- The preposition MIN is causative here, revealing the cause behind the effect of shame.
- The cause is ETSAH. This noun has the third masculine singular suffix, which is translated to our English possessive, 'his'.
- The king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser, gave counsel to the Northern Kingdom, asking tribute and offering peace and limited freedom in return.
- He took what he wanted, and then destroyed the nation anyway. Thus the shame because of his counsel. How embarrassing to give a bribe to allay your destruction, and then have the receptor of that bribe turn and destroy you anyway.

Principle: if you rely on someone or something other than God, you will receive shame. Never trust the integrity of one who has power over you, and yet no apparent restraint on his sin nature.

"Samaria is silenced, her king like debris on the face of the water.

DAMAH describes not violence, but the deathly calm of the post-destruction. Hosea also employs this in 4:5. It is the silence of the dead. This verb is in the niphil passive participle, and it reveals a continuous state imposed on the nation by God.

The second half of the verse has an interesting simile: the floating splinter on the face of the water. This is somewhat of a parallel from the previous verse, and so the idea of calm after destruction is the common thread.

The noun QETSEPH translates to 'debris' here. QETSEPH describes the splinters that are left from the snapping of a branch or board. It also describes what is left from a boat or a ship after its wreck. There the debris floats in silence and deathly quiet. So also the king of Israel at this time.

In the flow of discourse this stands as a coda of sorts - it denotes the finality of the matter of the fifth cycle of discipline. It is a chilling verse.

"And the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; Thorn and thistle will grow on their altars, then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!"

Not only will the people of the nation be destroyed, but also the places of demon worship.

Observe that the high places of Aven are made the equivalent of the sin of Israel. They summarize everything that is wrong with them.

Demon worship is the culmination of a long decline into the cosmic system, and so works well as a summary.

The niphil passive perfect verb NISHMADHU describes annihilation brought on by an outside agent. The Assyrians are the human agent, and God stands behind them.

What is not destroyed will fall into disuse... entropy will finish whatever the Assyrian leave incomplete.

And then Hosea personifies the altars, imputing the power of speech to them.

They say to the mountains, "cover us". This is more entropy.

And to the hills, "fall upon us". Even more entropy.

Today, we have a science that is based upon the uncovering and reversal of the work of entropy - it is archaeology. The great volume of available archaeological work is a testimony to the work of entropy in human lives and vast empires.

And remember... their glory and importance are gone. Their names have passed from the scene of history and are know no more. They only stand now for an example to those who live now, an example of how not to live.

Hosea 10:9,10

From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, O Israel; there they stand! Will not the war upon the sons of violent injustice overtake them in Gibeah? When it is My desire, I will chastise them; and the nations will be gathered against them when they are bound to two of their violent injustices.

Again there is reference to Gibeah. This is obviously a key theme in the discipline of Israel. This is the time like that other time. This degeneracy is much like that degeneracy.

The war against the sons of violent injustice will overtake them in Gibeah. Not only is there historical similarity in the behavior, but there will also be geographical similarity in the discipline.

Gibeah is some ten or twenty miles due north of Jerusalem, right along the invasion route of Tiglath-Pileser. It would be the final destination that is actually in Israel, and just north of the border with Judah. Just before the first destination inside the Southern Kingdom.

The exclamation "There they stand" refers to present day Judah as standing in the same moral place as the inhabitants of Gibeah during the time of the judges.

Violent injustice is from `AYLAH. It describes exactly the conditions of Gibeah, and now, of Israel.

The war upon the sons of violent injustice is a circumlocution for divine discipline. A circumlocution is another way of saying something in order to avoid monotony.

When war overtakes you, you are defeated!

God refers to the timing of His discipline, mentioning that He does it at the time of His desire. Although this makes the discipline sound arbitrary and possibly unfair, recall that God

never has a desire that is out of line with His perfect integrity.

Their binding is also another word for divine discipline. The act of binding someone to their sins is a description of the connection between sin and discipline. If you imagine that there is an invisible and unbreakable bond between every sin and its component discipline, then you are quite close to the truth.

They are bound to two of their violent acts. The nature of those violent acts is left unsaid, but the number simply indicates an excess of them.

Hosea 10:11-12

And Ephraim is a well-trained heifer that loves to thresh, but I will pass [a yoke] over the fairness of her neck; I will personally "ride" Ephraim, Judah will plow, Jacob will really harrow for himself. Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap according to virtue love; Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness on you.

Verse eleven contains a threefold agricultural analogy that forms a word of warning and admonition for both kingdoms.

Ephraim is a well-trained heifer... well trained comes from the Pual stem MELUMADAH. The Pual is intensive, and so this comes out as well-trained, with a hyphen. Even well-trained may be a little weak for the A. The heifer in the Old Testament can represent one of two things: the ritual sacrifice of the red heifer, as proscribed in Numbers 19, or just an animal with certain mannerisms. In our verse it is the latter.

The heifer was a young cow that had yet to give birth. This was a spoiled animal. It seldom did any hard work, and was often given an inordinate amount of feed. Because these animals were spoiled the farmers and ranchers of the day often noted their rebellious nature. They are not animals beaten down by service to their masters. They still have much spirit left, and are very difficult to domesticate.

So, our well-trained heifer is not one that would be well-trained at the yoke. Instead, it is well-trained in the sense that a pet is well-trained. This animal does stupid pet tricks. The modern Bible translation should be, "Ephraim is like a well-trained poodle."

This animal loves to thresh, because it is work that includes a free meal, and all you do is walk in a circle. So the animal walks, and eats, and eats and walks. It is not hard work at all!

This comes to describe Israel as a lazy, fat, spoiled nation. In the time of prosperity that they are experiencing, there is very little hardship for any of them.

This too describes our own nation - spoiled, unused to hardship, lazy.

But, the day of hard work has arrived. God will pass a yoke over the fairness of her neck. Oh! Look what a beautiful, smooth neck this heifer has.

"Fairness" comes from the word TOBH. It is the word that describes intrinsic good, or here, the unsullied nature of this heifer's neck. This neck is still virginal - it has never been touched by a yoke.

The yoke grinds against the neck of the pulling animal. Callouses and scar tissue grow and multiply. Pulling the plow is far more work than threshing.

God will "ride" Ephraim. This word is literally ride, but it is flexible in the Hebrew as in the English. Here it means to really get after someone. "Ride hard" as in galloping a horse over a long distance. With a yoke, it would depict the long and arduous labor of plowing. Of course, this is a metaphor for divine discipline.

Judah will plow. So, Hosea includes the Southern Kingdom in this metaphor. They too are heifers, and they too will acquire a yoke.

And Jacob will harrow for himself.

Jacob is a metaphor for the whole nation of Israel.

Harrowing was done after the harvest. It was designed to break up the soil for the next years' planting. A harrow is usually a wide, comb-like implement that is hitched to the plow. It breaks up the clods and root balls of the old crops, so that the soil is nice and loose for next years' planting. It is the hardest work of the whole year on the farm, because there is so much resistance to the harrow.

The verb for harrow is YESHADED, and it is in the Piel intensive stem. There is great intensity in this work.

"Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap according to virtue love; Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness on you.

Now, God says, it is time to plant a new crop.

Formerly, Hosea employed the sowing metaphor to teach the principle of divine discipline. Now, he uses it to teach the principle of divine blessing.

Hosea 8:7: "For they sow the wind, and they reap the storm wind.

The seed of righteousness is the Word of God; its crop is righteousness.

1 Cor 9:11, "If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?"

Mark 4:14, "The sower sows the Word.

Gal 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

The people are commanded to break up their fallow ground. The fallow ground is that which is left unused through a planting season. The people have left their spiritual lives in a state of disuse, and instead sow the seed of idolatry, both general and specific.

It is always time to seek the Lord.

The coming of the Lord is the first and second advents.

The rain of righteousness is the pouring forth of spiritual assets for a future dispensation. The rain of righteousness is the doctrinal teaching of Christ during the incarnation, and His millennial rule.

Hosea 10:13-15

You have plowed evil, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies - for you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors. And the crash of battle will arise among your people, and all your fortresses will be destroyed, like the devastation of Shalman on the day of the battle of Beth-arbel, mother upon children dashed in pieces. Thus he will do to you, Bethel, because of your great evil. At dawn the king of Israel will be completely cut off.

Hosea now concentrates on the culmination of the degeneracy of his country. They plowed, they reaped, and they ate the fruit.

Plowing wickedness is the same as initial involvement in the cosmic system. Notice that this time in the system is hard work.

Reaping injustice requires work as well, and represents the later stages of the devil's deception.

Eating the fruit of lies means taking the deception wholly and completely.

All three of these verbs are qal perfect, which describes here a completed past event. The action is complete.

And Hosea focuses this cosmic complex on Israel's wrong trust in the might of men. The way of Israel is human power - the power of the alliance, and the power of the sword.

Human viewpoint leads to human dependence. Trusting in human power is tantamount to the rejection of divine power.

The crash of battle will arise among them. This is the assault of Assyria. These are verbs in the perfect tense, showing the certain futurity of these events. They are the future prophetic perfect.

The reason we know of the shift to the future is the presence of one verb that is in the imperfect, and that is the Hophal imperfect of SHADAD, which means to devastate.

The crash of battle is SHA'ON. This is the roar of the waterfall or cascade. Battle in the ancient world had a crashing sound as thousands of shields and swords crashed together at once. The crash of battle is a terrible thing to the ears of the civilian populace. There is no defense, only hiding. And yet they will hear it again in Israel.

All of the fortresses will be devastated. Many of these fortresses were built under Jotham, king of Judah. They were in the border regions near Bethel.

Jotham took over from his father in 750 B.C., and ruled until 732 B.C.

He was a man who feared God, and he subdued the uprising of the Ammonites and supervised the building of the high gate of the temple.

Now the fortresses of Jotham will come crashing down.

Hosea compares the coming destruction to one past - the one which occurred as Shalmaneser the third assaulted Judah from the East.

The use of Shalman is difficult, because up to that time there had been five Shalmanesers of Assyria. It was very confusing.

However, locating the reference from this one is somewhat easier, for a similar turn of the phrase appears in:

Read Kings 8:7-15

These events occurred in 841 B.C. Ben-hadad and Hazael are not Assyrians, but Arameans.

That same year that Elisha resided in Damascus, Shalmaneser the third campaigned west against the Arameans, seeking and demanding tribute and allies.

Aram became allied to Shalmaneser under both Ben-hadad and Hazael. Their united armies moved further west together, until they came against Beth-arbel.

Beth-arbel was a town in the Transjordan that was destroyed by the allied army. It was an ugly thing indeed.

"mother upon children dashed in pieces." paints the picture of a pile of bodies at the top of a cliff. The area near Beth-arbel has many such cliffs - it is rugged terrain.

Hosea Chapter Eleven

Hosea 11:1-4

Sermon No. 1

When Israel was an infant, then I personally loved him; and from Egypt I called my son.

The more they [the false prophets] called them [the people of Israel], the more they went from them [the false prophets] to the Baals; they were really sacrificing and they were really burning incense to the idols.

And I myself personally taught Ephraim to walk; I took him by his arms, but they did not know that I healed them.

I drew them along with human cords, with ropes of love; and thus I was to them as lifters of a yoke from their jaws; and I fed him softly.

The infancy of Israel is the time from Abraham to the first Passover.

During that time, God had personal love for His chosen nation. That personal love was directed toward the doctrine in their souls.

The second half of the first verse is also a messianic prophecy (see attached sheet).

The people responded to whatever the false prophets were preaching, and they did it. Their idolatry was very intense.

Verse three goes back to the early childhood of this nation - God taught them how to walk. There is a strong image of God doing these things Himself - He does them personally. This is a great picture of God's immanence - His interaction with mankind in space and time.

But Israel rejected God's healing. It isn't that they couldn't know; it's that they refused to know it. God provided the knowledge, and they rejected it.

God drew them along out of Egypt with human cords and ropes of love - and again the love is personal.

Israel was in slavery in Egypt - God lifted their yoke and fed them softly. He was not harsh to a people who had been in slavery for some four hundred years. God with this sermon builds His case against Israel - from His gentle treatment of them they could not complain.

Hosea 11:5-7

Sermon No. 2

He will not return unto the land of Egypt; an Assyrian will be his king because they refused to return.

And a sword will whirl in his cities and will make an end to his limbs and consume them because of their counsels.

And my people are always hung up on turning from me; though they call to one on high, he will not at the same time lift up.

In spite of God's tenderness toward Israel, they did not respond, and instead rejected relationship with Him.

As a result, Assyria, a Gentile nation, will be their ruler. This is all but appropriate - they acted like Gentiles, and so now they will be ruled by them. They will discover what it is like to have a ruler other than God. Not in Egypt, but in Assyria.

In order to accomplish this result, the cities will be destroyed. A graphic description of traumatic amputation follows - the sword whirls and the limb comes to an end, and he is consumed.

The reason for the consumption is the counsels which they heeded. Not the counsels of God, but of men - false prophets and idolaters.

The hang up is not psychological, but figurative in another way. As they turn from God they get themselves all hung up - like they are in the bramble bushes.

Being stuck in the bramble bushes, they call to one on high - not Yahweh, but instead some demonic entity - their idol.

The idol cannot lift them from the bramble in which they find themselves entangled.

Hosea 11:8-11

Sermon No. 3

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I deliver you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart is altogether turned within Me; My compassions have grown tender.

I will not execute the fury of My anger; I shall not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst; and I shall not enter into a city.

They will walk behind Yahweh like a lion; He will roar - He will really roar; and His sons will come trembling from the waters.

They will tremble like a bird from Egypt, and as a dove from the land of Assyria; and I shall cause them to dwell in their house - a declaration of Yahweh.

God asks rhetorical questions that point to the difficulty of giving His beloved and chosen nation over to final discipline.

This is not an easy choice - there are strong ties due to their former virtue.

Admah and Zeboiim were two of the nations allied with Sodom and Gomorrah, referred to in Gen 14:8. They underwent final discipline with the two better known evil nations.

God is shown as agonizing over this decision, because it is so difficult. On the one hand there is their former glory; on the other hand is their present evil.

This is an anthropopathism, for God is decisive and always knows what is right. The illustration from human viewpoints shows that though man would have agonized over this, God is God. The

fact that God does not have difficulty with decisions shows Him to be all the greater.

There is a distinction about the final discipline of Israel - God has decided in eternity past not to wipe them off the face of the earth without a trace. Instead, they will go to Assyria in slavery, but have the opportunity to return.

They will walk behind Yahweh - the idea is that the lion cub walks behind its mother in complete safety due to the strength of its mother.

And then a prophecy - the roar of the lion precedes the re-establishment of Israel.

1. The roar is the shout of the archangel at the second advent.
2. The crescendo of the roar is well portrayed by the language here.
3. Trembling from the waters is a portrayal of human childbirth. Ancient writers often described childbirth as coming through or from the waters because of the similarity between amniotic fluid and water.
4. Trembling is just right for the physical status of a newborn child.
5. The second advent is the rebirth of Israel.
6. Their new home will be the millennial earth.
7. And this is a declaration of Yahweh. It will certainly come true

Verse twelve more properly belongs as the first verse of the twelfth chapter. We will leave it until then.

Hosea Chapter Twelve

Introduction

This chapter divides into two unequal parts.

1. The first part really begins with the last verse of chapter eleven, and continues on until verse eleven of chapter twelve. It serves as another indictment against the northern kingdom.
2. The second part covers just verses twelve through fourteen, and summarizes the Divine rationale for their punishment.

The chapter concentrates very much on the history of the patriarchs - the early history of the nation of Israel.

Hosea 11:12

Ephraim has surrounded Me with lying, and the house of Israel with deceit;

The indictment against Ephraim.

Ephraim and Judah.

Ephraim's deceit.

The Northern Kingdom has surrounded God with lies - they lie to God at every opportunity.

This is deceit that comes first in the soul through spiritual blindness, which is dishonesty with self and negative volition.

From the self, the lying and deceit moves to God - they lie to themselves about the true nature of God.

Judah's shaky faithfulness. " and Judah still wanders restlessly with God, and is being faithful with the holy ones.

Judah wanders with God. They are being faithful with the holy ones.

In other words, even though things may be a little shaky, they are still on the right side of the wrath of God.

Hosea 12:1

Ephraim is feeding [like an animal] on wind, and pursuing the east wind all the day.

Ephraim's folly.

Their folly illustrated, This is an especially humorous metaphor. The verb translated "feeding" specifically means to feed like an animal. They feed and slobber and munch like pigs - but only the the wind. They chase the east wind, a wind that is similar to our Zephyr winds. It is the wind that occurs every day throughout the year. You chase it, and it leads down to the ocean.

Their folly named, "He multiples lies and violence. And, he cuts a covenant with Assyria, and oil is personally carried to Egypt.

1. The more they lie, the more they must lie, in order to perpetuate the original lie.
2. The more violence they commit, the more revenge that is demanded.
3. They make a covenant that is a human effort to avert divine discipline.
4. They carry oil personally to Egypt in another attempt at the same thing.

Hosea 12:2

And there is a dispute between Yahweh and Judah, and as He visits Jacob according to his ways, He will personally repay him according to his deeds.

Yahweh's attention comes to Judah in verses two through six.

The existence of Divine displeasure and the method of discipline,

1. God has a dispute with the southern kingdom, even though they are still on the right side.
2. God will deal with them fairly if they continue the course of degeneracy. The discipline will be fair, intensive, and personal.

Jacob is a metaphor for the nation. His struggle with God, and his humility.

Hosea 12:3

In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
Jacob's character from birth,

Jacob's character applied to his relationship with God, "and by his [manly] strength he wrestled God.

Hosea 12:4

He wrestled against the angel [preincarnate Christ] and he [the angel] prevailed;

Jacob's humility before God, and the application brought to the southern kingdom. "he wept and sought His favor. He found Him at Bethel, and there He really spoke with us.

Hosea 12:5,6

Even Yahweh, the God of Armies; the Lord is His name.

Therefore, you will return to your God; keep virtue love and justice, and wait for your God continually.

So Jacob humbles himself after losing the struggle with the preincarnate Christ. He found God at Bethel, the house of God.

Then Hosea turns the phrase to include the entire nation of Judah. In fact, Hosea, a northerner, includes himself in the bunch.

Then Hosea confirms that they found the one true God, and no impostor.

And he implores the people of the south to return to God, and to keep inside of them the true virtues, and to wait always on God.

Hosea 12:7

A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress.

The economic deceit of the time.

This serves as a sort of pause from the narrative.

It is a completely separate thought that likely applies to both north and south; it makes the transition to the next section.

Hosea 12:8

And Ephraim says, "Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they will find in me no iniquity, which is sin.

The people of Ephraim look at their prosperity and mistake it for blessing from God.

Although it is not mentioned, they do not identify the seedier elements of their society as divine discipline.

They do their work, no matter how crooked, and receive good wages due to that deceit. And then comes a bold proclamation - there is no sin in him.

Hosea 12:9-11

But I have been Yahweh your God since the land of Egypt; I will personally make you live in tents again, as in the days of the appointed feast.

I have also intensely spoken to the prophets, and I personally gave numerous visions; and by the hand of the prophets I intensely used parables.

If there is idolatry in Gilead, surely they are worthless. In Gilgal they really sacrificed bulls, yes, their altars are like the stone heaps beside the furrows of the field.

There is first a historical reference - to the former great relationship between God and His nation. It concentrates on the faithfulness of God.

And then another historical reference - to the disastrous wilderness journey, and the feast of tabernacles.

And then the communication of God - prophecies and visions, even regular old parables, used intensely.

The last part has a conditional sentence and not a question. If there is idolatry, then they are worthless.

At Gilgal there was an intensity of demon worship; but now, just nothing left but altars broken up like piles of rocks.

Hosea 12:12-14

And Jacob fled to the land of Aram, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

And by a prophet the Lord personally brought Israel from Egypt, and by a prophet he was kept.

Ephraim has provoked to bitter anger; so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him, and bring back his reproach to him.

Verses 12 through 14 are a summary for divine judgment.

The past illustration of Jacob/Israel, verses twelve and thirteen,

The bloodguilt was that which applied in a murder or act of violence. Here, God leaves it on Ephraim. This also has a wider, salvation application.

Hosea Chapter Thirteen

Hosea 13:1-3

Hosea's First Sermon

The great word of Ephraim, now past. Hos. 13:1, **"When Ephraim spoke intently, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but he offended by Baal, and he died.**

At one time, the word of Ephraim was great - and that greatness, though not mentioned, was due to the grace of God.

But then the idol worship came and resulted in his death.

The idol industry in Ephraim. Hos. 13:2, **"And now they personally increase sin, and they made a molten image for themselves, idols made from silver, according to their own human craftsmanship - all of it the work of engravers. They say of them, "Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!"**

The increase of sin is industry, and the Ephraimites are personally involved.

All of the great effort in idol making is human craftsmanship, and none of it comes from the grace of God. This is the contrast with verse one.

And then they have the gall to demand that others kiss their work.

They will pass away from the pages of history. Hos. 13:3, **"Therefore they will be as a morning cloud, and as the dew rising early, disappearing; as chaff storm-driven from a threshing floor and as smoke from a latticed opening.**

These four similes all describe the way in which things disappear quickly. So the nation of Ephraim.

The reason is their idolatry.

Hosea 13:4-8

Hosea's Second Sermon

The exclusive nature of Yahweh. Hos. 13:4, **"And I Yahweh am your God, from the land of Egypt, and you will not know another God besides me, and there is no savior except me.**

This echoes back to the ten commandments, and forward to John 14:6. It concentrates on the exclusive nature of relationship with God.

It is an interesting twist on the first commandment, Ex 20:2-3, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me." The verbiage is quite the same, but in this verse something is added.

John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.

God is the only savior, and His Son is that Savior.

Although the people of Ephraim were in a political-military jam, it is clear throughout this book that they must have their spiritual problem solved before the others will come into line.

The former relationship between God and Israel. Hos. 13:5, **"I knew you in the wilderness, in a land of drought.**

The wilderness included a lot of adversity, and yet they knew God there.

That is, the second generation knew God there.

And now the northern kingdom endures a lot of adversity, but they do not know God.

The blessing of God led to their inflated view of self. Hos. 13:6, **"They were sated according to their pasturage; they were sated and so their heart was arrogant; therefore they have forgotten me.**

Israel was like a bunch of cattle in a really nice pasture.

The blessings of God formed the pasture, and Israel became sated with the sweet grass.

But from that contented state developed arrogance; they began to see themselves as the producers of the blessing. As a result, they forgot God.

The predatory attitude of God. Hos. 13:7, "**And so I will be as a lion to them; as a leopard, by the way I will watch stealthily.**

Israel is a fat cow in the pasture.

God is now the lion or the leopard, watching stealthily, waiting for the chance to pounce on a really good meal.

The violent nature of their discipline. Hos. 13:8, "**I will meet them like a bereaved bear, and I will tear the wall of their heart, and I will devour them there as a lion rips open the animal of the field.**

A bereaved bear is a daunting and terrifying animal. Really, not much can stop it until it is completely dead.

It is a swift and violent death, when the walls of the heart are torn. Death comes quickly and irrevocably in this case.

They will be messily devoured after their death. Lions tear and fight and scrap and cover themselves with blood as they eat their prey.

Hosea 13:9-11

Hosea's Third Sermon

The destruction of idolatry and the help of God. Hos. 13:9, "**It has really destroyed you, Israel; but your help is in Me.**

The desire for a king, and what good he does. Hos. 13:10, "**I want your king. Then may he save you in all of your cities! And your judges of whom you said, 'Give to me a king and princes.**

The first part is in quotes - it is what Israel said to God in the time of judges.

So God gave them a king, but the king is not the one who saves.

The king did no good, nor the judges, until Israel had a good relationship with God.

The presence or absence of a king as divine discipline. Hos. 13:11, "**I gave you a king in my wrath, and I take him in my fury.**

Israel was under divine discipline and thought that a king would be the solution to their problems.

God gave them Saul. Their problems immediately became worse.

They were under divine discipline with a king, and God took the king, and things got worse.

This has universal application. Only God can solve your problems.

Hosea 13:12-16

Hosea's Fourth Sermon

The hidden nature of Ephraim's sin. Hos. 13:12, "**The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hidden.**

Here, sin is a synonym for the divine discipline which comes as a result. This is called a metonymy.

The divine discipline is stored up like a fetus inside a woman.

However, the discipline is about to come forth. Hos. 13:13, "**The pains of a woman in childbirth will come to him; for he is not a wise son, and time will not stand still during labor.**

The discipline is in the childbirth stage - it is about to come out.

Contrary to the perspective of the woman, time does not stand still during childbirth.

Israel is foolish, and believes that he has all the time in the world to respond to the discipline.

The clock ticks, but the mercy of God waits still. Hos. 13:14, "**I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol; I will redeem them from death; O death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from your eyes.**

Hos. 13:15, "**Though he may bear fruit among his brothers, the East wind will come, the wind of the Lord going up from the wilderness. And his fountain will become dry; and his spring will be dried up. It will plunder his treasury of every precious article.**

Hos. 13:16, "**Samaria will be held guilty; she was rebellious against her God. They will fall by the sword, their children will be dashed in pieces, and pregnant ones ripped open.**

Hosea Chapter Fourteen

The conviction and punishment of the Northern Kingdom, Hos. 13:16. "Samaria is guilty; she was rebellious against her God. They will fall by the sword; their children will be dashed in pieces, and pregnant ones will be ripped open.

This more properly belongs with the final chapter.

The statement of Samaria's guilt concentrates on their present state, and is based on their past rebellious activities.

The punishment is placed into the imperfect tense, which shows that this portion of punishment is not written in stone. It is a possibility based on historical trends.

Again, the difficulty of the harshness of this punishment.

Question #1: are pregnant mothers automatically sinless due to their state?

Question #2: when a child loses his life, does this automatically mean that God has been unjust to him? Is it still possible for the justice of God to act?

This discipline occurs through the permissive will of God. God allows the suffering so that the person or group might recover.

This, even this, is motivated by God's love.

Hosea 14:1-3

The final plea of Yahweh, 14:1-3.

The basic plea. Hos. 14:1, "**Return, Israel unto Yahweh your God - you have stumbled in your iniquity.**

This forms the basic plea which will become the theme of the next few verses.

The reason for the plea is obvious by this point: Israel has stumbled in sin.

God puts the right words in the mouth of Israel, vv.2-3.

The plea for a grace restoration. Hos. 14:2, "**Take words with you and return unto Yahweh. Say to Him, 'Take away all iniquity, and take us graciously and let us pay a peace offering by our lips.**

God leads Israel by the hand - really by the mouth. He gives them the right words to say which would restore their relationship with Him.

He orders them with the Hebrew imperative. Although they do not have to obey, God is giving it His best shot. This entire chapter is a mixture of plea and command.

The request to take away all iniquity is not in the imperative. It is the simple imperfect.

The request to remove the iniquity is the equivalent of confession of sin. This is combined with the request to be taken graciously, which is in the imperative. There is an ascension of meaning here.

Then it moves back to a request, with the cohortative "let us pay..." This last part is especially meaningful. It is the precise thing which is compatible with 6:6. The request is to allow a peace offering of the lips, which is the exact nature of confession of sin. This makes it clear that the concept really did exist in the Old Testament.

The plea for behavior modification. Hos. 14:3a, "**Assyria will not save us, we will not ride a horse, and we will not say again, 'Our God' to the work of our hands,**

After the request for the restoration of relationship with God comes a pledge for behavior modification, so that the restoration will not be necessary again.

All of these "wills" are in the imperfect tense. They show only a possibility in the future, and not an absolute positive.

It is rather like saying that you do not want this kind of behavior to happen anymore. It is definitely not a swearing off of all sin, or even a promise to never do it again.

Assyria does not save, God does. Military might does not save, God does. Idolatry does not save, God does.

The principle for restoration. Hos. 14:3b, "**for in You an orphan will be shown compassion.**

This reveals the character of God related to the forgotten.

Quite often, orphans are not evil, just without parents. This is not the case with Israel. They are evil to the core.

Israel is like an ex-con; they are forgotten by society, much like orphans. The forgotten nature is the point of comparison.

God shows compassion to orphans; therefore, He should show compassion to Israel. This is their great hope.

Hosea 14:4-8

The restorative powers of God, vv.4-8.

God's intent to heal, and heal from His love. Hos. 14:4, **I will heal their apostasy - I will love them freely; for My anger will turn from them.**

The imperfect tense reveals that God is still willing to heal them. It does not form a promise that He will accomplish it. It does reveal God's patience to the very end.

The healing will come from God's love - just where you would expect.

And interesting - the final clause contains a perfect tense - it is a prophecy that God's anger will turn from them. Ultimately, this has yet to occur.

God's healing compared to the dew on the lily. Hos. 14:5a, **"I will be as the dew to Israel; he will sprout like the lily,**

The dew provided a great deal of water to the plants of Israel. The dew is a very delicate way to water the more sensitive plants.

The gentle watering of God results in a delicate sprouting, like a lily.

Israel has been deep in the cosmic system. Once they repent, God handles them in a very delicate way, and they would respond likewise.

The result of God's healing I: a strong root system. Hos. 14:5b, **"and he will strike his roots as [the cedars of] Lebanon.**

But that delicate root system of the lily will change to something more substantial: the roots of a Lebanon cedar.

The Lebanon cedar was the greatest tree of the ancient Near East. It had a vast root system. It would compare with our own Sequoia.

The result of God's healing II: a magnificent nation that is a pleasure to all. Hos. 14:6, **"His shoots will sprout, and his splendor will be like the olive, and his fragrance like [the cedars of] Lebanon.**

Two trees now describe the nation.

- The olive, which has many uses.

- The cedar, which brings a magnificent fragrance to all nearby. They are a pleasure to be around.

The requirement for God's healing. Hos. 14:7a, **"Those who live in His shadow will return; they will revive like grain and they will sprout like the vine.**

There is but one requirement for this healing - that those who would be healed live in the shadow of God.

Living in the shadow of God means remaining under His authority - following His plan for your life.

The result is a revival of life - of hope - of productivity - and rapid growth.

The well-remembered child of God. Hos. 14:7b, **"His remembrance will be like the wine of Lebanon.**

The one who lives in the shadow of God will be well-remembered. Their memory will be cherished.

This also foreshadows the last supper of Jesus Christ, and the legacy of His memory. It is indeed a Messianic prophecy.

The final rumble of warning. Hos. 14:8a, "Ephraim, what business do I have with idols? I have responded, and I will watch him.

Then the final rumble from God - a thunderstorm now past and distant.

God has responded completely to their sin. This views the discipline as a completed thing.

The watch continues.

The final metaphor for blessing. Hos. 14:8b, **"I am like a luxuriant cypress; your fruit comes from me.**

All blessing comes from God; He is the cypress, and we merely His fruit.

God is always the source of great blessing - He is what makes you great.

Hosea 14:9

A general exhortation, v.9.

The address. Hos. 14:9a, **"Whoever is wise, let him understand these sagacious things, and let him know them:**

This is no longer addressed to the people of Israel.

Instead, it goes out to whomever is wise - to any person or nation who might learn from the discipline and return to God.

Learn them; know them thoroughly.

The right way. Hos. 14:9b, "**for the ways of Yahweh are straight, and righteous ones will walk in them,**

The wrong way. Hos. 14:9c, "**but transgressors will stumble on them.**

End of Hosea Study
