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a ***Grace Notes*** course

## Hosea

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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## HOSEA

### Introduction

#### The Person of the Prophet.

—*Hosea*, הוֹשֵׁעַ, i.e., help, deliverance, or regarding it as *abstractum pro concreto*, helper, *salvator*, Ωσηέ (LXX.) or Ωσηέ (Rom. 9:20), *Osee* (Vulg.), the son of a certain *Beēri*, prophesied, according to the heading to his book (Hosea 1:1), in the reigns of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in that of king Jeroboam, son of Joash, of Israel; and, as the nature of his prophecies clearly proves, he prophesied not only concerning, but in, the kingdom of the ten tribes, so that we must regard him as a subject of that kingdom. This is favoured not only by the fact that his prophetic addresses are occupied throughout with the kingdom of the ten tribes, but also by the peculiar style and language of his prophecies, which have here and there an Aramaean colouring (for example, such forms as אֲמַאֲסָאָדָּ, Hosea 6:6; חֲבִי (inf.), Hosea 11:9; קִמּוֹשׁ for קִמוֹשׁ, Hosea 9:6; קָם for קָאם, Hosea 10:14; תִּרְגְּלֹתַי, Hosea 11:3; אֲאָכִיל for אֲכָלִיל, Hosea 11:4; תִּלּוּא, Hosea 11:7; יִפְרִיא for יִפְרָה, Hosea 13:15; and such words as רָתַת, Hosea 13:1; אָהִי for אָהִי, Hosea 13:10, 14), and still more by the intimate acquaintance with the circumstances and localities of the northern kingdom apparent in such passages as Hosea 5:1; 6:8, 9; 12:12; 14:6ff., which even goes so far that he calls the Israelitish kingdom “the land” in Hosea 1:2, and afterwards speaks of the king of Israel as “our king” (Hosea 7:5). On the other hand, neither the fact that he mentions the kings of Judah in the heading, to indicate the period of his prophetic labours (Hosea 1:1), nor the repeated allusions to Judah in passing (Hosea 1:7; 2:2; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12–14; 6:4, 11; 8:14; 10:11; 12:1, 3), furnish any proof that he was a Judaeen by birth, as Jahn and Maurer suppose. The allusion to the kings of Judah (Hosea 1:1), and that before king Jeroboam of Israel, may be

accounted for not from any outward relation to the kingdom of Judah, but from the inward attitude which Hosea assumed towards that kingdom in common with all true prophets. As the separation of the ten tribes from the house of David was in its deepest ground apostasy from Jehovah (see the commentary on 1 Kings 12.), the prophets only recognised the legitimate rulers of the kingdom of Judah as true kings of the people of God, whose throne had the promise of permanent endurance, even though they continued to render civil obedience to the kings of the kingdom of Israel, until God Himself once more broke up the government, which he had given to the ten tribes in His anger to chastise the seed of David which had fallen away from Him (Hosea 13:11). It is from this point of view that Hosea, in the heading to his book, fixes the date of his ministry according to the reigns of the kings of Judah, of whom he gives a complete list, and whom he also places first; whereas he only mentions the name of one king of Israel, viz., the king in whose reign he commenced his prophetic course, and that not merely for the purpose of indicating the commencement of his career with greater precision, as Calvin and Hengstenberg suppose, but still more because of the importance attaching to Jeroboam II in relation to the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Before we can arrive at a correct interpretation of the prophecies of Hosea, it is necessary, as Hosea 1 and 2 clearly show, that we should determine with precision the time when he appeared, inasmuch as he not only predicted the overthrow of the house of Jehu, but the destruction of the kingdom of Israel as well. The reference to Uzziah is not sufficient for this; for during the fifty-two years’ reign of this king of Judah, the state of things in the kingdom of the ten tribes was immensely altered. When Uzziah ascended the throne, the Lord had looked in mercy upon the misery of the ten tribes of Israel, and had sent them such help through Jeroboam, that, after gaining certain victories over the Syrians, he was able completely to break down their supremacy over Israel, and to restore the ancient

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boundaries of the kingdom (2 Kings 14:25–27). But this elevation of Israel to new power did not last long. In the thirty-seventh year of Uzziah’s reign, Zechariah, the son and successor of Jeroboam, was murdered by Shallum after a reign of only six months, and with him the house of Jehu was overthrown. From this time forward, yea, even from the death of Jeroboam in the twenty-seventh year of Uzziah’s reign, the kingdom advanced with rapid strides towards utter ruin. Now, if Hosea had simply indicated the time of his own labours by the reigns of the kings of Judah, since his ministry lasted till the time of Hezekiah, we might easily be led to assign its commencement to the closing years of Uzziah’s reign, in which the decline of the kingdom of Israel had already begun to show itself and its ruin could be foreseen to be the probable issue. If, therefore, it was to be made apparent that the Lord does reveal future events to His servants even “before they spring forth” (Isa. 42:9), this could only be done by indicating with great precision the time of Hosea’s appearance as a prophet, i.e., by naming king Jeroboam. Jeroboam reigned contemporaneously with Uzziah for twenty-six years, and died in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of the latter, who outlived him about twenty-five years, and did not die till the second year of Pekah (see at 2 Kings 15:1, 32). It is evident from this that Hosea commenced his prophetic labours within the twenty-six years of the contemporaneous reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam, that is to say, before the twenty-seventh year of the former, and continued to labour till a very short time before the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, since he prophesied till the time of Hezekiah, in the sixth year of whose reign Samaria was conquered by Shalmanezzer, and the kingdom of Israel destroyed. The fact that of all the kings of Israel Jeroboam only is mentioned, may be explained from the fact that the house of Jehu, to which he belonged, had been called to the throne by the prophet Elisha at the command of God, for the purpose of rooting out the worship of Baal from Israel, in return for which Jehu received the promise that

his sons should sit upon the throne to the fourth generation (2 Kings 10:30); and Jeroboam, the great-grandson of Jehu, was the last king through whom the Lord sent any help to the ten tribes (2 Kings 14:27). In his reign the kingdom of the ten tribes reached its greatest glory. After his death a long-continued anarchy prevailed, and his son Zechariah was only able to keep possession of the throne for half a year. The kings who followed fell, one after another by conspiracies, so that the uninterrupted and regular succession to the throne ceased with the death of Jeroboam; and of the six rulers who came to the throne after his death, not one was called by God through the intervention of a prophet, and only two were able to keep possession of it for any length of time, viz., Menahem for ten years, and Pekah for twenty.

Again, the circumstance that Hosea refers repeatedly to Judah in his prophecies, by no means warrants the conclusion that he was a citizen of the kingdom of Judah. The opinion expressed by Maurer, that an Israelitish prophet would not have troubled himself about the Judeans, or would have condemned their sins less harshly, is founded upon the unscriptural assumption, that the prophets suffered themselves to be influenced in their prophecies by subjective sympathies and antipathies as mere *morum magistri*, whereas they simply proclaimed the truth as organs of the Spirit of God, without any regard to man at all. If Hosea had been sent out of Judah into the kingdom of Israel, like the prophet in 1 Kings 13., or the prophet Amos, this would certainly have been mentioned, at all events in the heading, just as in the case of Amos the native land of the prophet is given. But cases of this kind formed very rare exceptions to the general rule, since the prophets in Israel were still more numerous than in the kingdom of Judah. In the reign of Jeroboam the prophet Jonah was living and labouring there (2 Kings 14:25); and the death of the prophet Elisha, who had trained a great company of young men for the service of the Lord in the schools of the prophets at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, had only occurred a few

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years before. The fact that a prophet who was born in the kingdom of the ten tribes, and laboured there, alluded in his prophecies to the kingdom of Judah, may be accounted for very simply, from the importance which this kingdom possessed in relation to Israel as a whole, both on account of the promises it had received, and also in connection with its historical development. Whilst the promises in the possession of the Davidic government of the kingdom of Judah formed a firm ground of hope for godly men in all Israel, that the Lord could not utterly and for ever cast off His people; the announcement of the judgments, which would burst upon Judah also on account of its apostasy, was intended to warn the ungodly against false trust in the gracious promises of God, and to proclaim the severity and earnestness of the judgment of God. This also explains the fact that whilst, on the one hand, Hosea makes the salvation of the ten tribes dependent upon their return to Jehovah their God and David their king (Hosea 1:7; 2:2), and warns Judah against sinning with Israel (Hosea 4:15), on the other hand, he announces to Judah also that it is plunging headlong into the very same ruin as Israel, in consequence of its sins (Hosea 5:5, 10ff., 6:4, 11, etc.); whereas the conclusions drawn by Ewald from these passages—namely, that at first Hosea only looked at Judah from the distance, and that it was not till a later period that he became personally acquainted with it, and not till after he had laboured for a long time in the northern part of the kingdom that he came to Judah and composed his book—are not only at variance with the fact, that as early as Hosea 2:2 the prophet proclaims indirectly the expulsion of Judah from its own land into captivity, but are founded upon the false notion, that the prophets regarded their own subjective perceptions and individual judgments as inspirations from God.

According to the heading, Hosea held his prophetic office for about sixty or sixty-five years (viz., 27–30 years under Uzziah, 31 under Jotham and Ahaz, and 1–3 years under Hezekiah). This also agrees with the contents of

his book. In Hosea 1:4, the overthrow of the house of Jehu, which occurred about eleven or twelve years after the death of Jeroboam, in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:10, 13), is foretold as being near at hand; and in Hosea 10:14, according to the most probable explanation of this passage, the expedition of Shalmanezzer into Galilee, which occurred, according to 2 Kings 17:3, at the commencement of the reign of Hoshea, the last of the Israelitish kings, is mentioned as having already taken place, whilst a fresh invasion of the Assyrians is threatened, which cannot be any other than the expedition of Shalmanezzer against king Hoshea, who had revolted from him, which ended in the capture of Samaria after a three years' siege, and the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes in the sixth year of Hezekiah. The reproof in Hosea 7:11, "They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria," and that in Hosea 12:1, "They do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt," point to the same period; for they clearly refer to the time of Hoshea, who, notwithstanding the covenant that he had made with Asshur, i.e., notwithstanding the oath of fidelity rendered to Shalmanezzer, purchased the assistance of the king of Egypt by means of presents, that he might be able to shake off the Assyrian yoke. The history knows nothing of any earlier alliances between Israel and Egypt; and the supposition that, in these reproaches, the prophet has in his mind simply two political parties, viz., an Assyrian and an Egyptian, is hardly reconcilable with the words themselves; nor can it be sustained by an appeal to Isa. 7:17ff., or even to Zech. 10:9–11, at least so far as the times of Menahem are concerned. Nor is it any more possible to infer from Hosea 6:8 and 12:11, that the active ministry of the prophet did not extend beyond the reign of Jotham, on the ground that, according to these passages, Gilead and Galilee, which were conquered and depopulated by Tiglath-pileser, whom Ahaz called to his help (2 Kings 15:29), were still in the possession of Israel (Simson). For it is by no means certain that Hosea 12:11 presupposes the possession of Galilee, but the

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words contained in this verse might have been uttered even after the Assyrians had conquered the land to the east of the Jordan; and in that case, the book, which comprises the sum and substance of all that Hosea prophesied during a long period, must of necessity contain historical allusions to events that were already things of the past at the time when his book was prepared (Hengstenberg). On the other hand, the whole of the attitude assumed by Assyria towards Israel, according to Hosea 5:13; 10:6; 11:5, points beyond the times of Menahem and Jotham, even to the Assyrian oppression, which first began with Tiglath-pileser in the time of Ahaz. Consequently there is no ground whatever for shortening the period of our prophet's active labours. A prophetic career of sixty years is not without parallel. Even Elisha prophesied for at least fifty years (see at 2 Kings 13:20, 21). This simply proves, according to the apt remark of Calvin, "how great and indomitable were the fortitude and constancy with which he was endowed by the Holy Spirit." Nothing certain is known concerning the life of the prophet; but his inner life lies before us in his writings, and from these we may clearly see that he had to sustain severe inward conflicts. For even if such passages as Hosea 4:4, 5, and 9:7, 8, contain no certain indications of the fact, that he had to contend against the most violent hostilities as well as secret plots, as Ewald supposes, the sight of the sins and abominations of his countrymen, which he had to denounce and punish, and the outburst of the divine judgments upon the kingdom thus incessantly ripening for destruction, which he had to experience, could not fail to fill his soul burning as it was for the deliverance of his people, with the deepest anguish, and to involve him in all kinds of conflicts.

## 2. Times of the Prophet

—When Hosea was called to be a prophet, the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel had been elevated to a position of great earthly power by Jeroboam II. Even under Joash the Lord had had compassion upon the children of Israel, and had turned to them again for the sake of His

covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so that Joash had been able to recover the cities, which Hazael of Syria had conquered in the reign of his father Jehoahaz, from Benhadad the son of Hazael, and to restore them to Israel (2 Kings 8:23–25). The Lord sent still further help through Jeroboam the son of Joash. Because He had not yet spoken to root out the name of Israel under heaven, He gave them victory in war, so that they were able to conquer Damascus and Hamath again, so far as they had belonged to Judah under David and Solomon, and to restore the ancient boundaries of Israel, from the province of Hamath to the Dead Sea, according to the word of Jehovah the God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant the prophet Jonah (2 Kings 14:25–28). But this revival of the might and greatness of Israel was only the last display of divine grace, through which the Lord sought to bring back His people from their evil ways, and lead them to repentance. For the roots of corruption, which the kingdom of Israel had within it from its very commencement, were not exterminated either by Joash or Jeroboam. These kings did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin, any more than their predecessors (2 Kings 13:11; 14:24). Jehu, the founder of this dynasty, had indeed rooted out Baal from Israel; but he had not departed from the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, through the setting up of which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had led Israel into sin (2 Kings 10:28, 29). Nor did his successors take any more care to walk in the law of Jehovah, the God of Israel, with all their heart. Neither the severe chastisements which the Lord inflicted upon the people and the kingdom, by delivering Israel up to the power of Hazael king of Syria and his son Benhadad, in the time of Jehu and Jehoahaz, causing it to be smitten in all its borders, and beginning to cut off Israel (2 Kings 10:32, 33; 13:3); nor the love and grace which He manifested towards them in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam, by liberating them from the oppression of the Syrians, and restoring the former greatness of the kingdom,—were sufficient to induce the king or the people to

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relinquish the worship of the calves. This sin of Jeroboam, however, although it was Jehovah who was worshipped under the symbol of the calf, was a transgression of the fundamental law of the covenant, which the Lord had made with Israel, and therefore was a formal departure from Jehovah the true God. And Jeroboam the son of Nebat was not content with simply introducing images or symbols of Jehovah, but had even banished from his kingdom the Levites, who opposed this innovation, and had taken men out of the great body of the people, who were not sons of Levi, and made them priests, and had gone so far as to change the time of celebrating the feast of tabernacles from the seventh month to the eighth (1 Kings 12:31, 32), merely for the purpose of making the religious gulf which separated the two kingdoms as wide as possible, and moulding the religious institutions of his kingdom entirely according to his own caprice. Thus the worship of the people became a political institution, in direct opposition to the idea of the kingdom of God; and the sanctuary of Jehovah was changed into a king's sanctuary (Amos 12:13). But the consequences of this image-worship were even worse than these. Through the representation of the invisible and infinite God under a visible and earthly symbol, the glory of the one true God was brought down within the limits of the finite, and the God of Israel was placed on an equality with the gods of the heathen. This outward levelling was followed, with inevitable necessity, by an inward levelling also. The Jehovah worshipped under the symbol of an ox was no longer essentially different from the Baals of the heathen, by whom Israel was surrounded; but the difference was merely a formal one, consisting simply in a peculiar mode of worship, which had been prescribed in His revelation of Himself, but which could not lay the foundation of any permanently tenable party-wall. For, whilst the heathen were accustomed to extend to the national Deity of Israel the recognition which they accorded to the different Baals, as various modes of revelation of one and the same Deity; the

Israelites, in their turn, were also accustomed to grant toleration to the Baals; and this speedily passed into formal worship. "Outwardly, the Jehovah-worship still continued to predominate; but inwardly, the worship of idols rose almost into exclusive supremacy. When once the boundary lines between the two religions were removed, it necessarily followed that that religion acquired the strongest spiritual force, which was most in accordance with the spirit of the nation. And from the very corruptions of human nature this was not the strict Jehovah religion, which being given by God did not bring down God to the low level of man, but sought to raise man up to its own lofty height, placing the holiness of God in the centre, and founding upon this the demand for holiness which it made upon its professors; but the voluptuous, sensual teaching of idolatry, pandering as it did to human corruption, just because it was from this it had originally sprung" (Hengstenberg's *Christology*). This seems to explain the fact, that whereas, according to the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, the worship of Baal still prevailed in Israel under the kings of the house of Jehu, according to the account given in the books of Kings Jehu had rooted out Baal along with the royal house of Ahab (1 Kings 10:28). Jehu had merely broken down the outward supremacy of the Baal worship, and raised up the worship of Jehovah once more, under the symbols of oxen or calves, into the state-religion. But this worship of Jehovah was itself a Baal-worship, since, although it was to Jehovah that the legal sacrifices were offered, and although His name was outwardly confessed, and His feasts were observed (Hosea 2:13), yet in heart Jehovah Himself was made into a Baal, so that the people even called Him their Baal (Hosea 2:16), and observed "the days of the Baals" (Hosea 2:13).

This inward apostasy from the Lord, notwithstanding which the people still continued to worship Him outwardly and rely upon His covenant, had of necessity a very demoralizing influence upon the national life. With the breach of the fundamental law of the

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covenant, viz., of the prohibition against making any likeness of Jehovah, or worshipping images made by men, more especially in consequence of the manner in which this prohibition was bound up with the divine authority of the law, all reverence not only for the holiness of the law of God, but for the holy God Himself, was undermined. Unfaithfulness towards God and His word begot faithlessness towards men. With the neglect to love God with all the heart, love to brethren also disappeared. And spiritual adultery had carnal adultery as its inevitable consequence, and that all the more because voluptuousness formed a leading trait in the character of the idolatry of Hither Asia. Hence all the bonds of love, of chastity, and of order were loosened and broken, and Hosea uttered this complaint: "There is no truthfulness, and no love, and no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing, and murder, and stealing, and adultery; they break out, and blood reaches to blood" (Hosea 4:1, 2). No king of Israel could put an effectual stop to this corruption. By abolishing the worship of the calves, he would have rendered the very existence of the kingdom doubtful. For if once the religious wall of division between the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah had been removed, the political distinction would have been in danger of following. And this was really what the founder of the kingdom of the ten tribes feared (1 Kings 12:27), inasmuch as the royal family that occupied the throne had received no promise from God of permanent continuance. Founded as it was in rebellion against the royal house of David, which God Himself had chosen, it bore within itself from the very first the spirit of rebellion and revolution, and therefore the germs of internal self-destruction. Under these circumstances, even the long, and in outward respects very prosperous, reign of Jeroboam II. could not possibly heal the deep-seated evils, but only helped to increase the apostasy and immorality; since the people, whilst despising the riches of the goodness and mercy of God, looked upon their existing prosperity as simply a reward for their righteousness before God, and were therefore confirmed in their self-

security and sins. And this was a delusion which false prophets loved to foster by predictions of continued prosperity (cf. Hosea 9:7). The consequence was, that when Jeroboam died, the judgments of God began to burst upon the incorrigible nation. There followed, first of all, an anarchy of eleven or twelve years; and it was not till after this that his son Zechariah succeeded in ascending the throne. But at the end of no more than six months he was murdered by Shallum, whilst he in his turn was put to death after a reign of one month by Menahem, who reigned ten years at Samaria (2 Kings 15:14, 17). In his reign the Assyrian king Phul invaded the land, and was only induced to leave it by the payment of a heavy tribute (2 Kings 15:19, 20). Menahem was followed by his son Pekachiah in the fiftieth year of Uzziah's reign; but after a reign of hardly two years he was murdered by his charioteer, Pekah the son of Remaliah, who held the throne for twenty years (2 Kings 15:22-27), but who accelerated the ruin of his kingdom by forming an alliance with the king of Syria to attack the brother kingdom of Judah (Isa. 7.). For king Ahaz, when hard pressed by Pekah and the Syrians, called to his help the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser, who not only conquered Damascus and destroyed the Syrian kingdom, but took a portion of the kingdom of Israel, viz., the whole of the land to the east of the Jordan, and carried away its inhabitants into exile (2 Kings 15:29). Hoshea the son of Elah conspired against Pekah, and slew him in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz; after which, an eight years' anarchy threw the kingdom into confusion, so that it was not till the twelfth year of Ahaz that Hoshea obtained possession of the throne. Very shortly afterwards, however, he came into subjection to the Assyrian king Shalmanezar, and paid him tribute. But after a time, in reliance upon the help of Egypt, he broke his oath of fealty to the king of Assyria; whereupon Shalmanezar returned, conquered the entire land, including the capital, and led Israel captive into Assyria (2 Kings 15:30; 17:1-6).



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### 3. The Book of Hosea.

—Called as he was at such a time as this to proclaim to his people the word of the Lord, Hosea necessarily occupied himself chiefly in bearing witness against the apostasy and corruption of Israel, and in preaching the judgment of God. The ungodliness and wickedness had become so great, that the destruction of the kingdom was inevitable; and the degenerate nation was obliged to be given up into the power of the Assyrians, the existing representatives of the heathen power of the world. But as God the Lord has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that he should turn and live, He would not exterminate the rebellious tribes of the people of His possession from the earth, or put them away for ever from His face, but would humble them deeply by severe and long-continued chastisement, in order that He might bring them to a consciousness of their great guilt and lead them to repentance, so that He might at length have mercy upon them once more, and save them from everlasting destruction. Consequently, even in the book of Hosea, promises go side by side with threatenings and announcements of punishment, and that not merely as the general hope of better days, kept continually before the corrected nation by the all-pitying love of Jehovah, which forgives even faithlessness, and seeks out that which has gone astray (Sims.), but in the form of a very distinct announcement of the eventual restoration of the nation, when corrected by punishment, and returning in sorrow and repentance to the Lord its God, and to David its king (Hosea 3:5),—an announcement founded upon the inviolable character of the divine covenant of grace, and rising up to the thought that the Lord will also redeem from hell and save from death, yea, will destroy both death and hell (Hosea 13:14). Because Jehovah had married Israel in His covenant of grace, but Israel, like an unfaithful wife, had broken the covenant with its God, and gone a whoring after idols, God, by virtue of the holiness of His love, must punish its unfaithfulness and apostasy. His love, however,

would not destroy, but would save that which was lost. This love bursts out in the flame of holy wrath, which burns in all the threatening and reproachful addresses of Hosea. In this wrath, however, it is not the consuming fire of an Elijah that burns so brightly; on the contrary, a gentle sound of divine grace and mercy is ever heard in the midst of the flame, so that the wrath but gives expression to the deepest anguish at the perversity of the nation, which will not suffer itself to be brought to a consciousness of the fact that its salvation rests with Jehovah its God, and with Him alone, either by the severity of the divine chastisements, or by the friendliness with which God has drawn Israel to Himself as with cords of love. This anguish of love at the faithlessness of Israel so completely fills the mind of the prophet, that his rich and lively imagination shines perpetually by means of changes of figure and fresh turns of thought, to open the eyes of the sinful nation to the abyss of destruction by which it is standing, in order if possible to rescue it from ruin. The deepest sympathy gives to his words a character of excitement, so that for the most part he merely hints at the thoughts in the briefest possible manner, instead of carefully elaborating them, passing with rapid changes from one figure and simile to another, and moving forward in short sentences and oracular utterances rather than in a calmly finished address, so that his addresses are frequently obscure, and hardly intelligible.

His book does not contain a collection of separate addresses delivered to the people, but, as is generally admitted now, a general summary of the leading thoughts contained in his public addresses. The book is divisible into two parts, viz., Hosea 1–3 and 4–14, which give the kernel of his prophetic labours, the one in a more condensed, and the other in a more elaborate form. In the *first* part, which contains the “beginning of the word of Jehovah by Hosea” (Hosea 1:2), the prophet first of all describes, in the symbolical form of a marriage, contracted by the command of God with an adulterous woman, the spiritual adultery of the

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ten tribes of Israel, i.e., their falling away from Jehovah into idolatry, together with its consequences,—namely, the rejection of the rebellious tribes by the Lord, and their eventual return to God, and restoration to favour (Hosea 1:2; 2:3). He then announces, in simple prophetic words, not only the chastisements and punishments that will come from God, and bring the people to a knowledge of the ruinous consequences of their departure from God, but also the manifestations of mercy by which the Lord will secure the true conversion of those who are humbled by suffering, and their eventual blessedness through the conclusion of a covenant founded in righteousness and grace (Hosea 2:4–25); and this attitude on the part of God towards His people is then confirmed by a symbolical picture in Hosea 3.

In the second part, these truths are expanded in a still more elaborate manner; but the condemnation of the idolatry and moral corruption of Israel, and the announcement of the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, predominate,—the saving prediction of the eventual restoration and blessedness of those, who come to the consciousness of the depth of their own fall, being but briefly touched upon. This part, again, cannot be divided into separate addresses, as there is an entire absence of all reliable indices, just as in the last part of Isaiah (Isa. 40–66); but, like the latter, it falls into three large, unequal sections, in each of which the prophetic address advances from an accusation of the nation generally and in its several ranks, to a description of the coming punishment, and finishes up with the prospect of the ultimate rescue of the punished nation. At the same time, an evident progress is discernible in the three, not indeed of the kind supposed by Ewald, namely, that the address contained in Hosea 4–9:9 advances from the accusation itself to the contemplation of the punishment proved to be necessary, and then rises through further retrospective glances at the better days of old, at the destination of the church, and at the everlasting love, to brighter prospects and the firmest hopes; nor in that proposed by De Wette, viz., that the wrath

becomes more and more threatening from Hosea 8 onwards, and the destruction of Israel comes out more and more clearly before the reader's eye. The relation in which the three sections stand to one another is rather the following: In the first, Hosea 4–6:3, the religious and moral degradation of Israel is exhibited in all its magnitude, together with the Judgment which follows upon the heels of this corruption; and at the close the conversion and salvation aimed at in this judgment are briefly indicated. In the second and much longer section, Hosea 6:4–11:11, the incorrigibility of the sinful nation, or the obstinate persistence of Israel in idolatry and unrighteousness, in spite of the warnings and chastisements of God, is first exposed and condemned (Hosea 6:4–7:16); then, secondly, the judgment to which they are liable is elaborately announced as both inevitable and terrible (Hosea 8:1–9:9); and thirdly, by pointing out the unfaithfulness which Israel has displayed towards its God from the very earliest times, the prophet shows that it has deserved nothing but destruction from off the face of the earth (Hosea 9:10–11:8), and that it is only the mercy of God which will restrain the wrath, and render the restoration of Israel possible (Hosea 11:9–11). In the third section (Hosea 12–14) the ripeness of Israel for judgment is confirmed by proofs drawn from its falling into Canaanitish ways, notwithstanding the long-suffering, love, and fidelity with which God has always shown Himself to be its helper and redeemer (Hosea 12, 13). To this there is appended a solemn appeal to return to the Lord; and the whole concludes with a promise, that the faithful covenant God will display the fulness of His love again to those who return to Him with a sincere confession of their guilt, and will pour upon them the riches of His blessing (Hosea 14).

This division of the book differs, indeed, from all the attempts that have previously been made; but it has the warrant of its correctness in the three times repeated promise (Hosea 6:1–3; 9:9–11, and 14:2–9), by which each of the supposed sections is rounded off. And

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within these sections we also meet with pauses, by which they are broken up into smaller groups, resembling strophes, although this further grouping of the prophet's words is not formed into uniform strophes. For further remarks on this point, see the Exposition.

From what has been said, it clearly follows that Hosea himself wrote out the quintessence of his prophecies, as a witness of the Lord against the degenerate nation, at the close of his prophetic career, and in the book which bears his name. The preservation of this book, on the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, may be explained very simply from the fact that, on account of the intercourse carried on between the prophets of the Lord in the two kingdoms, it found its way to Judah soon after the time of its composition, and was there spread abroad in the circle of the prophets, and so preserved. We find, for example, that Jeremiah has used it again and again in his prophecies (compare Aug. Kueper, *Jeremias librorum ss. interpretes atque vindex*. Berol. 1837 p. 67 seq.). For the exegetical writings on Hosea, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, p. 275.

## Hosea 1

### Israel's Adultery—Ch. 1–3

**Hosea 1–3.** On the ground of the relation hinted at even in the Pentateuch (Ex. 34:15, 16; Lev. 17:7; 20:5, 6; Num. 14:33; Deut. 32:16–21), and still further developed in the Song of Solomon and Ps. 45, where the gracious bond existing between the Lord and the nation of His choice is represented under the figure of a marriage, which Jehovah had contracted with Israel, the falling away of the ten tribes of Israel from Jehovah into idolatry is exhibited as whoredom and adultery, in the following manner. In the *first* section (Hosea 1:2–2:3), God commands the prophet to marry a wife of whoredoms with children of whoredoms, and gives names to the children born to the prophet by this wife, which indicate the fruits of idolatry, viz., the rejection and putting away of Israel on the part of God (Hosea 1:2–9), with the appended promise of the eventual

restoration to favour of the nation thus put away (Hosea 2:1–3). In the *second* section (Hosea 2:4–25), the Lord announces that He will put an end to the whoredom, i.e., to the idolatry of Israel, and by means of judgments will awaken in it a longing to return to Him (vv. 4–15), that He will thereupon lead the people once more through the wilderness, and, by the renewal of His covenant mercies and blessings, will betroth Himself to it for ever in righteousness, mercy, and truth (vv. 16–25). In the *third* section (Hosea 3) the prophet is commanded to love once more a wife beloved of her husband, but one who had committed adultery; and after having secured her, to put her into such a position that it will be impossible for her to carry on her whoredom any longer. And the explanation given is, that the Israelites will sit for a long time without a king, without sacrifice, and without divine worship, but that they will afterwards return, will seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and will rejoice in the goodness of the Lord at the end of the days. Consequently the falling away of the ten tribes from the Lord, their expulsion into exile, and the restoration of those who come to a knowledge of their sin—in other words, the guilt and punishment of Israel, and its restoration to favour—form the common theme of all three sections, and that in the following manner: In the first, the sin, the punishment, and the eventual restoration of Israel, are depicted symbolically in all their magnitude; in the second, the guilt and punishment, and also the restoration and renewal of the relation of grace, are still further explained in simple prophetic words; whilst in the third, this announcement is visibly set forth in a new symbolical act.

In both the first and third sections, the prophet's announcement is embodied in a symbolical act; and the question arises here, Whether the marriage of the prophet with an adulterous woman, which is twice commanded by God, is to be regarded as a marriage that was actually consummated, or merely as an internal occurrence, or as a parabolical representation. The supporters of a marriage outwardly

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consummated lay the principal stress upon the simple words of the text. The words of v. 2, "Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms," and of v. 3, "So he went and took Gomer ... which conceived," etc., are so definite and so free from ambiguity, that it is impossible, they think, to take them with a good conscience in any other sense than an outward and historical one. But since even Kurtz, who has thrown the argument into this form, feels obliged to admit, with reference to some of the symbolical actions of the prophets, e.g., Jer. 25:15ff. and Zech. 11, that they were not actually and outwardly performed, it is obvious that the mere words are not sufficient of themselves to decide the question *à priori*, whether such an action took place in the objective outer world, or only inwardly, in the spiritual intuition of the prophet himself.

The reference to Isa. 7:3, and 8:3, 4, as analogous cases, does apparently strengthen the conclusion that the occurrence was an outward one; but on closer examination, the similarity between the two passages in Isaiah and the one under consideration is outweighed by the differences that exist between them. It is true that Isaiah gave his two sons names with symbolical meanings, and that in all probability by divine command; but nothing is said about his having married his wife by the command of God, nor is the birth of the first-named son ever mentioned at all. Consequently, all that can be inferred from Isaiah is, that the symbolical names of the children of the prophet Hosea furnish no evidence against the outward reality of the marriage in question. Again, the objection, that the command to marry a wife of whoredoms, if understood as referring to an outward act, would be opposed to the divine holiness, and the divine command, that priests should not marry a harlot, cannot be taken as decisive. For what applied to priests cannot be transferred without reserve to prophets; and the remark, which is quite correct in itself, that God as the Holy One could not command an immoral act, does not touch the case, but simply rests upon a misapprehension of the divine command, viz., upon the idea that God

commanded the prophet to beget children with an immoral person without a lawful marriage, or that the "children of whoredom," whom Hosea was to take along with the "wife of whoredom," were the three children whom she bare to him (Hosea 1:3, 6, 8); in which case either the children begotten by the prophet are designated as "children of whoredom," or the wife continued her adulterous habits even after the prophet had married her, and bare to the prophet illegitimate children. But neither of these assumptions has any foundation in the text. The divine command, "Take thee a wife of whoredom, and children of whoredom," neither implies that the wife whom the prophet was to marry was living at that time in virgin chastity, and was called a wife of whoredom simply to indicate that, as the prophet's lawful wife, she would fall into adultery; nor even that the children of whoredom whom the prophet was to take along with the wife of whoredom are the three children whose birth is recorded in Hosea 1:3, 6, 8. The meaning is rather that the prophet is to take, along with the wife, the children whom she already had, and whom she had born as a harlot before her marriage with the prophet. If, therefore, we assume that the prophet was commanded to take this woman and her children, for the purpose, as Jerome has explained it, of rescuing the woman from her sinful course, and bringing up her neglected children under paternal discipline and care; such a command as this would be by no means at variance with the holiness of God, but would rather correspond to the compassionate love of God, which accepts the lost sinner, and seeks to save him. And, as Kurtz has well shown, it cannot be objected to this, that by such a command and the prophet's obedience on his first entering upon his office, all the beneficial effects of that office would inevitably be frustrated. For if it were a well-known fact, that the woman whom the prophet married had hitherto been leading a profligate life, and if the prophet declared freely and openly that he had taken her as his wife for that very reason, and with this intention, according to the command of God; the marriage, the shame of which the

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prophet had taken upon himself in obedience to the command of God, and in self-denying love to his people, would be a practical and constant sermon to the nation, which might rather promote than hinder the carrying out of his official work. For he did with this woman what Jehovah was doing with Israel, to reveal to the nation its own sin in so impressive a manner, that it could not fail to recognise it in all its glaring and damnable character. But however satisfactorily the divine command could be vindicated on the supposition that this was its design, we cannot find any argument upon this in favour of the outward reality of the prophet's marriage, for the simple reason that the supposed object is neither expressed nor hinted at in the text. According to the distinct meaning of the words, the prophet was to take a "wife of whoredom," for the simple purpose of begetting children by her, whose significant names were to set before the people the disastrous fruits of their spiritual whoredom. The behaviour of the woman after the marriage is no more the point in question than the children of whoredom whom the prophet was to take along with the woman; whereas this is what we should necessarily expect, if the object of the marriage commanded had been the reformation of the woman herself and of her illegitimate children. The very fact that, according to the distinct meaning of the words, there was no other object for the marriage than to beget children, who should receive significant names, renders the assumption of a real marriage, i.e., of a marriage outwardly contracted and consummated, very improbable. And this supposition becomes absolutely untenable in the case of Hosea 3, where Jehovah says to the prophet (v. 1), "Go again, love a woman beloved by the husband, and committing adultery;" and the prophet, in order to fulfil the divine command, purchases the woman for a certain price (v. 2). The indefinite expression *'issâh*, a wife, instead of thy wife, or at any rate the wife, and still more the purchase of the woman, are quite sufficient of themselves to overthrow the opinion, that the prophet is here directed to seek out once more his former

wife Gomer, who has been unfaithful, and has run away, and to be reconciled to her again. Ewald therefore observes, and Kurtz supports the assertion, that the pronoun in "I bought *her* to me," according to the simple meaning of the words, cannot refer to any adulteress you please who had left her husband, but must refer to one already known, and therefore points back to Hosea 1. But with such paralogsms as these we may insert all kinds of things in the text of Scripture. The suffix in וְאִשְׁרָהּ, "I bought *her*" (v. 2), simply refers to the "woman beloved of her friend" mentioned in v. 1, and does not prove in the remotest degree, that the "woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress," is the same person as the Gomer mentioned in Hosea 1. The indefiniteness of *'issâh* without the article, is neither removed by the fact that, in the further course of the narrative, this (indefinite) woman is referred to again, nor by the examples adduced by Kurtz, viz., יְקַח-לֵב in Hosea 4:11, and אֶת-רֵי-צוֹ in Hosea 5:11, since any linguist knows that these are examples of a totally different kind. The perfectly indefinite אִשָּׁה receives, no doubt, a more precise definition from the predicates רַע וּמְנַאֲפֶת, so that we cannot understand it as meaning any adulteress whatever; but it receives no such definition as would refer back to Hosea 1. A woman beloved of her friend, i.e., of her husband, and committing adultery, is a woman who, although beloved by her husband, or notwithstanding the love shown to her by her husband, commits adultery. Through the participles אֶתְהַבֵּת and מְנַאֲפֶת, the love of the friend (or husband), and the adultery of the wife, are represented as contemporaneous, in precisely the same manner as in the explanatory clauses which follow: "as Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, and they turn to other gods!" If the *'issâh* thus defined had been the *Gomer* mentioned in Hosea 1, the divine command would necessarily have been thus expressed: either, "Go, and love again the wife beloved by her husband, who has committed adultery;" or, "Love again thy wife, who is still

loved by her husband, although she has committed adultery." But it is quite as evident that this thought cannot be contained in the words of the text, as that out of two co-ordinate participles it is impossible that the one should have the force of the future or present, and the other that of the pluperfect. Nevertheless, Kurtz has undertaken to prove the possibility of the impossible. He observes, first of all, that we are not justified, of course, in giving to "love" the meaning "love again," as Hofmann does, because the husband has never ceased to love his wife, in spite of her adultery; but for all that, the explanation, *restitue amoris signa* (restore the pledges of affection), is the only intelligible one; since it cannot be the love itself, but only the manifestation of love, that is here referred to. But the idea of "again" cannot be smuggled into the text by any such arbitrary distinction as this. There is nothing in the text to the effect that the husband had not ceased to love his wife, in spite of her adultery; and this is simply an inference drawn from Hosea 2:11, through the identification of the prophet with Jehovah, and the tacit assumption that the prophet had withdrawn from Gomer the expressions of his love, of all which there is not a single syllable in Hosea 1. This assumption, and the inference drawn from it, would only be admissible, if the identity of the woman, beloved by her husband and committing adultery, with the prophet's wife Gomer, were an established fact. But so long as this is not proved, the argument merely moves in a circle, assuming the thing to be demonstrated as already proved. But even granting that "love" were equivalent to "love again," or "manifest thy love again to a woman beloved of her husband, and committing adultery," this could not mean the same things as "go to thy former wife, and prove to her by word and deed the continuance of thy love," so long as, according to the simplest rules of logic, "a wife" is not equivalent to "thy wife." And according to sound logical rules, the identity of the *'isshâh* in Hosea 3:1 and the *Gomer* of Hosea 1:3 cannot be inferred from the fact that the expression used in Hosea 3:1, is, "Go love a woman," and not "Go take a wife," or from the

fact that in Hosea 1:2 the woman is simply called a shore, not an adulteress, whereas in Hosea 3:1 she is described as an adulteress, not as a whore. The words "love a woman," as distinguished from "take a wife," may indeed be understood, apart from the connection with v. 2, as implying that the conclusion of a marriage is alluded to; but they can never denote "the restoration of a marriage bond that had existed before," as Kurtz supposes. And the distinction between Hosea 1:2, where the woman is described as "a woman of whoredom," and Hosea 3:1, where she is called "an adulteress," points far more to a distinction between Gomer and the adulterous woman, than to their identity.

But Hosea 3:2, "I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver," etc., points even more than Hosea 3:1 to a difference between the women in Hosea 1 and Hosea 3. The verb *kârâh*, to purchase or acquire by trading, presupposes that the woman had not yet been in the prophet's possession. The only way in which Kurtz is able to evade this conclusion, is by taking the fifteen pieces of silver mentioned in v. 2, not as the price paid by the prophet to purchase the woman as his wife, but in total disregard of *וְאָמַר אֵלֶיהָ* in Hosea 3:3, as the cost of her maintenance, which the prophet gave to the woman for the period of her detention, during which she was to sit, and not go with any man. But the arbitrary nature of this explanation is apparent at once. According to the reading of the words, the prophet bought the woman to himself for fifteen pieces of silver and an ephah and a half of barley, i.e., bought her to be his wife, and then said to her, "Thou shalt sit for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot," etc. There is not only not a word in Hosea 3 about his having assigned her the amount stated for her maintenance; but it cannot be inferred from Hosea 2:9, 11, because there it is not the prophet's wife who is referred to, but Israel personified as a harlot and adulteress. And that what is there affirmed concerning Israel cannot be applied without reserve to explain the symbolical description in

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Hosea 3, is evident from the simple fact, that the conduct of Jehovah towards Israel is very differently described in Hosea 2, from the course which the prophet is said to have observed towards his wife in Hosea 3:3. In Hosea 2:7, the adulterous woman (Israel) says, "I will go and return to my former husband, for then was it better with me than now;" and Jehovah replies to this (Hosea 2:8, 9), "Because she has not discovered that I gave her corn and new wine, etc.; therefore will I return, and take away my corn from her in the season thereof, and my wine," etc. On the other hand, according to the view adopted by Kurtz, the prophet took his wife back again because she felt remorse, and assigned her the necessary maintenance for many days.

From all this it follows, that by the woman spoken of in Hosea 3, we cannot understand the wife Gomer mentioned in Hosea 1. The "wife beloved of the companion (i.e., of her husband), and committing adultery," is a different person from the daughter of Diblathaim, by whom the prophet had three children (Hosea 1). If, then, the prophet really contracted and consummated the marriage commanded by God, we must adopt the explanation already favoured by the earlier commentators, viz., that in the interval between Hosea 1 and Hosea 3 Gomer had either died, or been put away by her husband because she would not repent. But we are only warranted in adopting such a solution as this, provided that the assumption of a marriage consummated outwardly either has been or can be conclusively established. And as this is not the case, we are not at liberty to supply things at which the text does not even remotely hint. If, then, in accordance with the text, we must understand the divine commands in Hosea 1 and 3 as relating to two successive marriages on the part of the prophet with unchaste women, every probability is swept away that the command of God and its execution by the prophet fall within the sphere of external reality. For even if, in case of need, the first command, as explained above, could be vindicated as worthy of God, the same vindication would not apply to the command to

contract a second marriage of a similar kind. The very end which God is supposed to have had in view in the command to contract such a marriage as this, could only be attained by *one* marriage. But if Hosea had no sooner dissolved the first marriage, than he proceeded to conclude a second with a person in still worse odour, no one would ever have believed that he did this also in obedience to the command of God. And the divine command itself to contract this second marriage, if it was intended to be actually consummated, would be quite irreconcilable with the holiness of God. For even if God could command a man to marry a harlot, for the purpose of rescuing her from her life of sin and reforming her, it would certainly be at variance with the divine holiness, to command the prophet to marry a person who had either broken the marriage vow already, or who would break it, notwithstanding her husband's love; since God, as the Holy One, cannot possibly sanction adultery. Consequently no other course is left to us, than the picture to ourselves Hosea's marriages as internal events, i.e., as merely carried out in that inward and spiritual intuition in which the word of God was addressed to him; and this removes all the difficulties that beset the assumption of marriages contracted in outward reality. In occurrences which merely happened to a prophet in spiritual intercourse with God, not only would all reflections as to their being worthy or not worthy of God be absent, when the prophet related them to the people, for the purpose of impressing their meaning upon their hearts, inasmuch as it was simply their significance, which came into consideration and was to be laid to heart; but this would also be the case with the other difficulties to which the external view is exposed—such, for example, as the questions, why the prophet was to take not only a woman of whoredom, but children of whoredom also, when they are never referred to again in the course of the narrative; or what became of Gomer, whether she was dead, or had been put away, when the prophet was commanded the second time to love an

adulterous woman—since the sign falls back behind the thing signified.

But if, according to this, we must regard the marriages enjoined upon the prophet as simply facts of inward experience, which took place in his own spiritual intuition, we must not set them down as nothing more than parables which he related to the people, or as poetical fictions, since such assumptions as these are at variance with the words themselves, and reduce the statement, “God said to Hosea,” to an unmeaning rhetorical phrase. The inward experience has quite as much reality and truth as the outward; whereas a parable or a poetical fiction has simply a certain truth, so far as the subjective imagination is concerned, but no reality.

**Hosea 1:1.** Ch. 1:1 contains the *heading* to the whole of the book of Hosea, the contents of which have already been discussed in the Introduction, and defended against the objections that have been raised, so that there is no tenable ground for refusing to admit its integrity and genuineness. The *tchillath dibber-Yhōvâh* with which v. 2 introduces the prophecy, necessarily presupposes a heading announcing the period of the prophet’s ministry; and the “twisted, un-Hebrew expression,” which Hitzig properly finds to be so objectionable in the translation, “in the days of Jeroboam, etc., was the commencement of Jehovah’s speaking,” etc., does not prove that the heading is spurious, but simply that Hitzig’s construction is false, i.e., that *tchillath dibber-Yhōvâh* is not in apposition to v. 1, but the heading in v. 1 contains an independent statement; whilst the notice as to time, with which v. 2 opens, does not belong to the heading of the whole book, but simply to the prophecy which follows in Hosea 1–3.

**Israel the Adulteress, and Her Children—Ch. 1:2–2:3**

For the purpose of depicting before the eyes of the sinful people the judgment to which Israel has exposed itself through its apostasy from the Lord, Hosea is to marry a prostitute, and beget

children by her, whose names are so appointed by Jehovah as to point out the evil fruits of the departure from God. V. 2. “*At first, when Jehovah spake to Hosea, Jehovah said to him, God, take thee a wife of whoredom, and children of whoredom; for whoring the land whoreth away from Jehovah.*” The marriage which the prophet is commanded to contract, is to set forth the fact that the kingdom of Israel has fallen away from the Lord its God, and is sunken in idolatry. Hosea is to commence his prophetic labours by exhibiting this fact. יִתְחַלֵּת דְבָר יי: literally, “at the commencement of ‘Jehovah spake,’ ” i.e., at the commencement of Jehovah’s speaking (*dibber* is not an infinitive, but a perfect, and *tchillath* an accusative of time (Ges. § 118, 2); and through the constructive the following clause is subordinated to *tchillath* as a substantive idea: see Ges. § 123, 3, Anm. 1; Ewald, § 332, c.). דְבָר with ב, not to speak to a person, or through any one (ב is not = אֶל), but to speak with (lit., in) a person, expressive of the inwardness or urgency of the speaking (cf. Num. 12:6, 8; Hab. 2:1; Zech. 1:9, etc.). “Take to thyself:” i.e., marry (a wife). אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים is stronger than זִנוּנָה. A woman of whoredom, is a woman whose business or means of livelihood consists in prostitution. Along with the woman, Hosea is to take children of prostitution as well. The meaning of this is, of course, not that he is first of all to take the woman, and then beget children of prostitution by her, which would require that the two objects should be connected with קָח *per zeugma*, in the sense of “*accipe uxorem et suscipe ex ea liberos*” (Drus.), or “*sume tibi uxorem forn. et fac tibi filios forn.*” (Vulg.). The children begotten by the prophet from a married harlot-wife, could not be called *yaldē znūnīm*, since they were not illegitimate children, but legitimate children of the prophet himself; nor is the assumption, that the three children born by the woman, according to vv. 3, 6, 8, were born in adultery, and that the prophet was not their father, in harmony with v. 3, “he took Gomer, and she conceived and bare him a son.” Nor can this mode of escaping



from the difficulty, which is quite at variance with the text, be vindicated by an appeal to the connection between the figure and the fact. For though this connection “necessarily requires that both the children and the mother should stand in the same relation of estrangement from the lawful husband and father,” as Hengstenberg argues; it neither requires that we should assume that the mother had been a chaste virgin before her marriage to the prophet, nor that the children whom she bare to her husband were begotten in adultery, and merely palmed off upon the prophet as his own. The marriage which the prophet was to contract, was simply intended to symbolize the relation already existing between Jehovah and Israel, and not the way in which it had come into existence. The “wife of whoredoms” does not represent the nation of Israel in its virgin state at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, but the nation of the ten tribes in its relation to Jehovah at the time of the prophet himself, when the nation, considered as a whole, had become a wife of whoredom, and in its several members resembled children of whoredom. The reference to the children of whoredom, along with the wife of whoredom, indicates unquestionably *à priori*, that the divine command did not contemplate an actual and outward marriage, but simply a symbolical representation of the relation in which the idolatrous Israelites were then standing to the Lord their God. The explanatory clause, “for the land whoreth,” etc., clearly points to this. הָאָרֶץ, “the land,” for the population of the land (cf. Hosea 4:1). זָנָה מֵאֲחֵרַי יי, to whore from Jehovah, i.e., to fall away from Him (see at Hosea 4:12).

**Hosea 1:3.** “And he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son.” Gomer does indeed occur in Gen. 10:2, 3, as the name of a people; but we never meet with it as the name of either a man or a woman, and judging from the analogy of the names of her children, it is chosen with reference to the meaning of the word itself. *Gomer* signifies perfection, completion in a passive sense, and is not meant to indicate

destruction or death (Chald. Marck), but the fact that the woman was thoroughly perfected in her whoredom, or that she had gone to the furthest length in prostitution. *Diblaim*, also, does not occur again as a proper name, except in the names of Moabitish places in Num. 33:46 (*Almon-diblathaim*) and Jer. 48:22 (*Beth-diblathaim*); it is formed from *dbhēlâh*, like the form ‘Ephraim, and in the sense of *dbhēlîm*, fig-cakes. “Daughter of fig-cakes,” equivalent to liking fig-cakes, in the same sense as “loving grape-cakes” in Hosea 3:1, viz., *deliciis dedita*. The symbolical interpretation of these names is not affected by the fact that they are not explained, like those of the children in vv. 4ff., since this may be accounted for very simply from the circumstance, that the woman does not now receive the names for the first time, but that she had them at the time when the prophet married her.

**Hosea 1:4.** “And Jehovah said to him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little, and I visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.” The prophet is directed by God as to the names to be given to his children, because the children, as the fruit of the marriage, as well as the marriage itself, are instructive signs for the idolatrous Israel of the ten tribes. The first son is named *Jezreel*, after the fruitful plain of Jezreel on the north side of the Kishon (see at Josh. 17:16); not, however, with any reference to the appellative meaning of the name, viz., “God sows,” which is first of all alluded to in the announcement of salvation in Hosea 2:24, 25, but, as the explanation which follows clearly shows, on account of the historical importance which this plain possessed for Israel, and that not merely as the place where the last penal judgment of God was executed in the kingdom of Israel, as Hengstenberg supposes, but on account of the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel, i.e., because Israel had there contracted such blood-guiltiness as was now speedily to be avenged upon the house of Jehu. At the city of *Jezreel*, which stood in this plain, Ahab had previously filled up the measure of his sin by the ruthless murder of Naboth, and had thus brought upon

himself that blood-guiltiness for which he had been threatened with the extermination of all his house (1 Kings 21:19ff.). Then, in order to avenge the blood of all His servants the prophets, which Ahab and Jezebel had shed, the Lord directed Elisha to anoint Jehu king, with a commission to destroy the whole of Ahab's house (2 Kings 9:1ff.). Jehu obeyed this command. Not only did he slay the son of Ahab, viz., king Koram, and cause his body to be thrown upon the portion of land belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite, appealing at the same time to the word of the Lord (2 Kings 9; 21-26), but he also executed the divine judgment upon Jezebel, upon the seventy sons of Ahab, and upon all the rest of the house of Ahab (Hosea 9:30-10:17), and received the following promise from Jehovah in consequence: "Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, because thou hast done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, sons of thine of the fourth generation shall sit upon the throne of Israel" (Hosea 10:30). It is evident from this that the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel, which was to be avenged upon the house of Jehu, is not to be sought for in the fact that Jehu had there exterminated the house of Ahab; nor, as Hitzig supposes, in the fact that he had not contented himself with slaying Joram and Jezebel, but had also put Ahaziah of Judah and his brethren to death (2 Kings 9:27; 10:14), and directed the massacre described in Hosea 10:11. For an act which God praises, and for which He gives a promise to the performer, cannot be in itself an act of blood-guiltiness. And the slaughter of Ahaziah and his brethren by Jehu, though not expressly commanded, is not actually blamed in the historical account, because the royal family of Judah had been drawn into the ungodliness of the house of Ahab, through its connection by marriage with that dynasty; and Ahaziah and his brethren, as the sons of Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab, belonged both in descent and disposition to the house of Ahab (2 Kings 8:18, 26, 27), so that, according to divine appointment, they were to perish with it. Many expositors, therefore, understand by "the blood

of Jezreel," simply the many acts of unrighteousness and cruelty which the descendants of Jehu had committed in Jezreel, or "the grievous sins of all kinds committed in the palace, the city, and the nation generally, which were to be expiated by blood, and demanded as it were the punishment of bloodshed" (Marck). But we have no warrant for generalizing the idea of *dmē* in this way; more especially as the assumption upon which the explanation is founded, viz., that Jezreel was the royal residence of the kings of the house of Jehu, not only cannot be sustained, but is at variance with 2 Kings 15:8, 13, where Samaria is unquestionably described as the royal residence in the times of Jeroboam II and his son Zechariah. The blood-guiltinesses (*dmē*) at Jezreel can only be those which Jehu contracted at Jezreel, viz., the deeds of blood recorded in 2 Kings 9 and 10, by which Jehu opened the way for himself to the throne, since there are no others mentioned.

The apparent discrepancy, however, that whereas the extermination of the royal family of Ahab by Jehu is commended by God in the second book of Kings, and Jehu is promised the possession of the throne even to the fourth generation of this sons in consequence, in the passage before us the very same act is charged against him as an act of blood-guiltiness that has to be punished, may be solved very simply by distinguishing between the act in itself, and the motive by which Jehu was instigated. In itself, i.e., regarded as the fulfilment of the divine command, the extermination of the family of Ahab was an act by which Jehu could not render himself criminal. But even things desired or commanded by God may become crimes in the case of the performer of them, when he is not simply carrying out the Lord's will as the servant of God, but suffers himself to be actuated by evil and selfish motives, that is to say, when he abuses the divine command, and makes it the mere cloak for the lusts of his own evil heart. That Jehu was actuated by such motives as this, is evident enough from the verdict of the historian in 2 Kings 10:29, 31, that Jehu did indeed exterminate Baal out of

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Israel, but that he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, from the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, to walk in the law of Jehovah the God of Israel with all his heart. "The massacre, therefore," as Calvin has very correctly affirmed, "was a crime so far as Jehu was concerned, but with God it was righteous vengeance." Even if Jehu did not make use of the divine command as a mere pretext for carrying out the plans of his own ambitious heart, the massacre itself became an act of blood-guiltiness that called for vengeance, from the fact that he did not take heed to walk in the law of God with all his heart, but continued the worship of the calves, that fundamental sin of all the kings of the ten tribes. For this reason, the possession of the throne was only promised to him with a restriction to sons of the fourth generation. On the other hand, it is no argument against this, that "the act referred to cannot be regarded as the chief crime of Jehu and his house," or that "the bloody act, to which the house of Jehu owed its elevation, never appears elsewhere as the cause of the catastrophe which befall this houses; but in the case of all the members of his family, the only sin to which prominence is given in the books of Kings, is that they did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9)" (Hengstenberg). For even though this sin in connection with religion may be the only one mentioned in the books of Kings, according to the plan of the author of those books, and though this may really have been the principal act of sin; it was through that sin that the bloody deeds of Jehu became such a crime as cried to heaven for vengeance, like the sin of Ahab, and such an one also as Hosea could describe as the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel, which the Lord would avenge upon the house of Jehu at Jezreel, since the object in this case was not to enumerate all the sins of Israel, and the fact that the apostasy of the ten tribes, which is condemned in the book of Kings as the sin of Jeroboam, is represented here under the image of whoredom, shows very clearly that the evil root alone is indicated, out of which all the sins sprang that rendered the kingdom ripe for

destruction. Consequently, it is not merely the fall of the existing dynasty which is threatened here, but also the suppression of the kingdom of Israel. The "kingdom of the house of Israel" is obviously not the sovereignty of the house of Jehu in Israel, but the regal sovereignty in Israel. And to this the Lord will put an end  $\text{וַיִּקַּח}$ , i.e., in a short time. The extermination of the house of Jehu occurred not long after the death of Jeroboam, when his son was murdered in connection with Shallum's conspiracy (2 Kings 15:8ff.). And the strength of the kingdom was also paralyzed when the house of Jehu fell, although fifty years elapsed before its complete destruction. For of the five kings who followed Zechariah, only one, viz., Menahem, died a natural death, and was succeeded by his son. The rest were all dethroned and murdered by conspirators, so that the overthrow of the house of Jehu may very well be called "the beginning of the end, the commencement of the process of decomposition" (Hengstenberg: compare the remarks on 2 Kings 15:10ff.).

**Hosea 1:5.** "And it cometh to pass in that day, that I break in pieces the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." The indication of time, "in that day," refers not to the overthrow of the house of Jehu, but to the breaking up of the kingdom of Israel, by which it was followed. The bow of Israel, i.e., its might (for the bow, as the principal weapon employed in war, is a synecdochical epithet, used to denote the whole of the military force upon which the continued existence of the kingdom depended (Jer. 49:35), and is also a symbol of strength generally; vid., Gen. 49:24, 1 Sam. 2:4), is to be broken to pieces in the valley of Jezreel. The paronomasia between Israel and Jezreel is here unmistakeable. And here again Jezreel is not introduced with any allusion to its appellative signification, i.e., so that the mention of the name itself is intended to indicate the dispersion or breaking up of the nation, but simply with reference to its natural character, as the great plain in which, from time immemorial, even down to the most recent period, all the great battles have been fought for

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the possession of the land (cf. v. Raumer, *Pal.* pp. 40, 41). The nation which the Lord had appointed to be the instrument of His judgment is not mentioned here. But the fulfilment shows that the Assyrians are intended, although the brief historical account given in the books of Kings does not notice the place in which the Assyrians gained the decisive victory over Israel; and the statement made by Jerome, to the effect that it was in the valley of Jezreel, is probably simply an inference drawn from this passage.

With the name of the first child, *Jezreel*, the prophet had, as it were with a single stroke, set before the king and the kingdom generally the destruction that awaited them. In order, however, to give further keenness to this threat, and cut off every hope of deliverance, he now announces two other births. V. 6. *“And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And He (Jehovah) said to him, Call her name Unfavoured; for I will no more favour the house of Israel, that I should forgive them.”* The second birth is a female one, not in order to symbolize a more degenerate race, or the greater need of help on the part of the nation, but to get a name answering to the idea, and to set forth, under the figure of sons and daughters, the totality of the nation, both men and women. *Lō’ ruchâmâh*, lit., she is not favoured; for *ruchâmâh* is hardly a participle with the ם dropped, since לֹא is never found in close connection with the participle (Ewald, § 320, c.), but rather the third pers. perf. fem. in the pausal form. The child receives this name to indicate that the Lord will not continue (אֲוֹסִיף) to show compassion towards the rebellious nation, as He hitherto has done, even under Jeroboam II (2 Kings 13:23). For the purpose of strengthening לֹא אֲוֹסִיף, the clause כִּי נָשָׂא וּגְוֹרָהּ is added. This can hardly be understood in any other way than in the sense of לֹא נָשָׂא עֲוֹן לָהּ, viz., to take away sin or guilt, i.e., to forgive it (cf. Gen. 18:24, 26, etc.). The explanation, “I will take away from them, sc. everything” (Hengstenberg), has no tenable support in Hosea 5:14, because there the object

to be supplied is contained in the context, and here this is not the case.

**Hosea 1:7.** *“And I will favour the house of Judah, and save them through Jehovah their God; and I will not save them through bow, and sword, and war, through horses and through horsemen.”* By a reference to the opposite lot awaiting Judah, all false trust in the mercy of God is taken away from the Israelites. From the fact that deliverance is promised to the kingdom of Judah through Jehovah its God, Israel is to learn that Jehovah is no longer its own God, but that He has dissolved His covenant with the idolatrous race. The expression, “through Jehovah their God,” instead of the pronoun “through me” (as, for example, in Gen. 19:24), is introduced with special emphasis, to show that Jehovah only extends His almighty help to those who acknowledge and worship Him as their God. And what follows, viz., “I will not save them by bow,” etc., also serves to sharpen the punishment with which the Israelites are threatened; for it not only implies that the Lord does not stand in need of weapons of war and military force, in order to help and save, but that these earthly resources, on which Israel relied (Hosea 10:13), could afford no defence or deliverance from the enemies who would come upon it. *Milchâmâh*, “war,” in connection with bow and sword, does not stand for weapons of war, but “embraces everything belonging to war—the skill of the commanders, the bravery of heroes, the strength of the army itself, and so forth” (Hengstenberg). Horses and horsemen are specially mentioned, because they constituted the main strength of an army at that time. Lastly, whilst the threat against Israel, and the promise made to Judah, refer primarily, as Hosea 2:1–3 clearly show, to the time immediately approaching, when the judgment was to burst upon the kingdom of the ten tribes, that is to say, to that attack upon Israel and Judah on the part of the imperial power of Assyria, to which Israel succumbed, whilst Judah was miraculously delivered (2 Kings 19; Isa. 37); it has also a meaning which applies to all times, namely, that whoever forsakes the living God, will fall into destruction, and cannot

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reckon upon the mercy of God in the time of need.

**Hosea 1:8, 9.** *“And she weaned Unfavoured, and conceived, and bare a son. And He said, Call his name Not-my-people; for ye are not my people, and I will not be yours.”* If weaning is mentioned not merely for the sake of varying the expression, but with a deliberate meaning, it certainly cannot indicate the continued patience of God with the rebellious nation, as Calvin supposes, but rather implies the uninterrupted succession of the calamities set forth by the names of the children. As soon as the Lord ceases to compassionate the rebellious tribes, the state of rejection ensues, so that they are no longer “my people,” and Jehovah belongs to them no more. In the last clause, the words pass with emphasis into the second person, or direct address, “I will not be to you,” i.e., will no more belong to you (cf. Ps. 118:6; Ex. 19:5; Ezek. 16:8). We need not supply *’Elohim* here, and we may not weaken *לֹא אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם* into “no more help you, or come to your aid.” For the fulfilment, see 2 Kings 17:18.

**Hosea 1:10, 11.** Vv. 10, 11 (Heb. Bib. Hosea 2:1–3). To the symbolical action, which depicts the judgment that falls blow after blow upon the ten tribes, issuing in the destruction of the kingdom, and the banishment of its inhabitants, there is now appended, quite abruptly, the saving announcement of the final restoration of those who turn to the Lord.

**Hosea 1:10.** (Heb. Bib. Hosea 2:1). *“And the number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which is not measured and not counted; and it will come to pass at the place where men say to them, Ye are not my people, it will be said to them, Sons of the living God.”* It might appear as though the promise made to the patriarchs, of the innumerable increase of Israel, were abolished by the rejection of the ten tribes of Israel predicted here. But this appearance, which might confirm the ungodly in their false security, is met by the proclamation of salvation, which we must connect by means of a “nevertheless” with the preceding announcement of punishment. The almost

verbal agreement between this announcement of salvation and the patriarchal promises, more especially in Gen. 22:17 and 32:13, does indeed naturally suggest the idea, that by the “sons of Israel,” whose innumerable increase is here predicted, we are to understand all the descendants of Jacob or of Israel as a whole. But if we notice the second clause, according to which those who are called “not-my-people” will then be called “sons of the living God;” and still more, if we observe the distinction drawn between the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah in v. 11, this idea is proved to be quite untenable, since the “sons of Israel” can only be the ten tribes. We must assume, therefore, that the prophet had in his mind only one portion of the entire nation, namely, the one with which alone he was here concerned, and that he proclaims that, even with regard to this, the promise in question will one day be fulfilled. In what way, is stated in the second clause. At the place where *בְּמִקוֹם אֲשֶׁר* does not mean “instead of” or “in the place of,” as the Latin *loco* does; cf. Lev. 4:24, 33; Jer. 22:12; Ezek. 21:35; Neh. 4:14) men called them *Lō’-’ammī*, they shall be called sons of the living God. This place must be either Palestine, where their rejection was declared by means of this name, or the land of exile, where this name became an actual truth. The correctness of the latter view, which is the one given in the Chaldee, is proved by v. 11, where their coming up out of the land of exile is spoken of, from which it is evident that the change is to take place in exile. Jehovah is called *El chai*, the living God, in opposition to the idols which idolatrous Israel had made for itself; and “sons of the living God” expresses the thought, that Israel would come again into the right relation to the true God, and reach the goal of its divine calling. For the whole nation was called and elevated into the position of sons of Jehovah, through its reception into the covenant with the Lord (compare Deut. 14:1; 32:19, with Ex. 4:22).

The restoration of Israel will be followed by its return to the Lord. V. 11. *“And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel gather together, and*

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*appoint themselves one head, and come up out of the land; for great is the day of Jezreel.*" The gathering together, i.e., the union of Judah and Israel, presupposes that Judah will find itself in the same situation as Israel; that is to say, that it will also be rejected by the Lord. The object of the union is to appoint themselves *one* head, and go up out of the land. The words of the two clauses recal to mind the departure of the twelve tribes of Israel out of Egypt. The expression, to appoint themselves a head, which resembles Num. 14:4, where the rebellious congregation is about to appoint itself a head to return to Egypt, points back to Moses; and the phrase, "going up out of the land," is borrowed from Ex. 1:10, which also serves to explain הָאֶרֶץ with the definite article. The correctness of this view is placed beyond all doubt by Hosea 2:14, 15, where the restoration of rejected Israel is compared to leading it through the desert to Canaan; and a parallel is drawn between it and the leading up out of Egypt in the olden time. It is true that the banishment of the sons of Israel out of Canaan is not predicted *disertis verbis* in what precedes; but it followed as clearly as possible from the banishment into the land of their enemies, with which even Moses had threatened the people in the case of continued apostasy (Lev. 26 and Deut. 28). Moses had, in fact, already described the banishment of rebellious Israel among the heathen in so many words, as carrying them back into Egypt (Deut. 28:68), and had thereby intimated that Egypt was the type of the heathen world, in the midst of which Israel was to be scattered abroad. On the basis of these threatenings of the law, Hosea also threatens ungodly Ephraim with a return to Egypt in Hosea 8:13 and Hosea 9:3. And just as in these passages Egypt is a type of the heathen lands, into which Israel is to be driven away on account of its apostasy from the Lord; so, in the passage before us, Canaan, to which Israel is to be led up out of Egypt, is a type of the land of the Lord, and the guidance of them to Canaan a figurative representation of the reunion of Israel with its God, and of its reinstatement in the full enjoyment of the blessings of salvation,

which are shadowed forth in the fruits and productions of Canaan. (For further remarks, see vv. 14, 15.) Another point to be noticed is the use of the word *'echâd*, one (single) head, i.e., one prince or king. The division of the nation into two kingdoms is to cease; and the house of Israel is to turn again to Jehovah, and to its king David (Hosea 3:5). The reason assigned for this promise, in the words "for great is (will be) the day of Jezreel," causes not little difficulty; and this cannot be removed by giving a different meaning to the name Jezreel, on the ground of vv. 24, 25, from that which it has in Hosea 1:4, 5. The day of Jezreel can only be the day on which the might of Israel was broken in the valley of Jezreel, and the kingdom of the house of Israel was brought to an end (Hosea 1:4). This day is called great, i.e., important, glorious, because of its effects and consequences in relation to Israel. The destruction of the might of the ten tribes, the cessation of their kingdom, and their expulsion into exile, form the turning-point, through which the conversion of the rebellious to the Lord, and their reunion with Judah, are rendered possible. The appellative meaning of הַיַּרְדֵּן, to which there was no allusion at all in Hosea 1:4, 5, is still kept in the background to a great extent even here, and only so far slightly hinted at, that in the results which follow to the nation, from the judgment poured out upon Israel in Jezreel, the valley of Jezreel becomes a place in which God sows seed for the renovation of Israel.

To confirm the certainty of this most joyful turn of events, the promise closes with the summons in Hosea 2; 1: "Say ye to your brethren: My people; and to your sisters, Favoured." The prophet "sees the favoured nation of the Lord (in spirit) before him, and calls upon its members to accost one another joyfully with the new name which had been given to them by God" (Hengstenberg). The promise attaches itself in form to the names of the children of the prophet. As their names of ill omen proclaimed the judgment of rejection, so is the salvation which awaits the nation in the future

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announced to it here by a simple alteration of the names into their opposite through the omission of the אָל.

So far as the fulfilment of this prophecy is concerned, the fact that the patriarchal promise of the innumerable multiplication of Israel is to be realized through the pardon and restoration of Israel, as the nation of the living God, shows clearly enough that we are not to look for this in the return of the ten tribes from captivity to Palestine, their native land. Even apart from the fact, that the historical books of the Bible (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther) simply mention the return of a portion of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with the priests and Levites, under Zerubbabel and Ezra, and that the numbers of the ten tribes, who may have attached themselves to the Judaeans on their return, or who returned to Galilee afterwards as years rolled by, formed but a very small fraction of the number that had been carried away (compare the remarks on 2 Kings 17:24); the attachment of these few to Judah could not properly be called a union of the sons of Israel and of the sons of Judah, and still less was it a fulfilment of the word, "They appoint themselves one head." As the union of Israel with Judah is to be effected through their gathering together under one head, under Jehovah their God and under David their king, this fulfilment falls within the Messianic times, and hitherto has only been realized in very small beginnings, which furnish a pledge of their complete fulfilment in the last times, when the hardening of Israel will cease, and all Israel be converted to Christ (Rom. 11:25, 26). It is by no means difficult to bring the application, which is made of our prophecy in 1 Pet. 2:10 and Rom. 9:25, 26, into harmony with this. When Peter quotes the words of this prophecy in his first epistle, which nearly all modern commentators justly suppose to have been written to Gentile Christians, and when Paul quotes the very same words (Hosea 2:1, with Hosea 1:10) as proofs of the calling of the Gentiles to be the children of God in Christ; this is not merely an application to the Gentiles of

what is affirmed of Israel, or simply the clothing of their thoughts in Old Testament words, as Huther and Wiesinger suppose, but an argument based upon the fundamental thought of this prophecy. Through its apostasy from God, Israel had become like the Gentiles, and had fallen from the covenant of grace with the Lord. Consequently, the re-adoption of the Israelites as children of God was a practical proof that God had also adopted the Gentile world as His children. "Because God had promised to adopt the children of Israel again, He must adopt the Gentiles also. Otherwise this resolution would rest upon mere caprice, which cannot be thought of in God" (Hengstenberg). Moreover, although membership in the nation of the Old Testament covenant rested primarily upon lineal descent, it was by no means exclusively confined to this; but, from the very first, Gentiles also were received into the citizenship of Israel and the congregation of Jehovah through the rite of circumcision, and could even participate in the covenant mercies, namely, in the passover as a covenant meal (Ex. 12:14). There was in this an indirect practical prophecy of the eventual reception of the whole of the Gentile world into the kingdom of God, when it should attain through Christ to faith in the living God. Even through their adoption into the congregation of Jehovah by means of circumcision, believing Gentiles were exalted into children of Abraham, and received a share in the promises made to the fathers. And accordingly the innumerable multiplication of the children of Israel, predicted in v. 10, is not to be restricted to the actual multiplication of the descendants of the Israelites now banished into exile; but the fulfilment of the promise must also include the incorporation of believing Gentiles into the congregation of the Lord (Isa. 44:5). This incorporation commenced with the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles by the apostles; it has continued through all the centuries in which the church has been spreading in the world; and it will receive its final accomplishment when the fulness of the Gentiles shall enter into the kingdom of God. And as the number of the children of Israel is

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thus continually increased, this multiplication will be complete when the descendants of the children of Israel, who are still hardened in their hearts, shall turn to Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Redeemer (Rom. 11:25, 26).

## Hosea 2

### Chastisement of Idolatrous Israel, and Its Conversion and Final Restoration—Ch. 2:1–23 (Heb. Bib. 2:4–25)

**Hosea 2:1–23.** What the prophet announced in Hosea 1:2–2:1, partly by a symbolical act, and partly also in a direct address, is carried out still further in the section before us. The close connection between the contents of the two sections is formally indicated by the simple fact, that just as the first section closed with a summons to appropriate the predicted salvation, so the section before us commences with a call to conversion. As Rückert aptly says, “The significant pair give place to the thing signified; Israel itself appears as the adulterous woman.” The Lord Himself will set bounds to her adulterous conduct, i.e., to the idolatry of the Israelites. By withdrawing the blessings which they have hitherto enjoyed, and which they fancy that they have received from their idols, He will lead the idolatrous nation to reflection and conversion, and pour the fulness of the blessings of His grace in the most copious measure upon those who have been humbled and improved by the punishment. The threatening and the announcement of punishment extend from v. 2 to v. 13; the proclamation of salvation commences with v. 14, and reaches to the close of v. 23. The threatening of punishment is divided into two strophes, viz., vv. 2–7 and vv. 8–13. In the first, the condemnation of their sinful conduct is the most prominent; in the second, the punishment is more fully developed.

**Hosea 2:2.** *“Reason with your mother, reason! for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband: that she put away her whoredom from her countenance, and her adultery from between her breasts.”* Jehovah is the speaker, and the command to get rid of the whoredom is

addressed to the Israelites, who are represented as the children of the adulterous wife. The distinction between mother and children forms part of the figurative drapery of the thought; for, in fact, the mother had no existence apart from the children. The nation or kingdom, regarded as an ideal unity, is called the mother; whereas the several members of the nation are the children of this mother. The summons addressed to the children to contend or reason with this mother, that she may give up her adultery, presupposes that, although the nation regarded as a whole was sunken in idolatry, the individual members of it were not all equally slaves to it, so as to have lost their susceptibility for the divine warning, or the possibility of conversion. Not only had the Lord reserved to Himself seven thousand in Elijah’s time who had not bowed their knees to Baal, but at all times there were many individuals in the midst of the corrupt mass, who hearkened to the voice of the Lord and abhorred idolatry. The children had reason to plead, because the mother was no longer the wife of Jehovah, and Jehovah was no longer her husband, i.e., because she had dissolved her marriage with the Lord; and the inward, moral dissolution of the covenant of grace would be inevitably followed by the outward, actual dissolution, viz., by the rejection of the nation. It was therefore the duty of the better-minded of the nation to ward off the coming destruction, and do all they could to bring the adulterous wife to desist from her sins. The object of the pleading is introduced with וְתִסְרֵן. The idolatry is described as whoredom and adultery. Whoredom becomes adultery when it is a wife who commits whoredom. Israel had entered into the covenant with Jehovah its God; and therefore its idolatry became a breach of the fidelity which it owed to its God, an act of apostasy from God, which was more culpable than the idolatry of the heathen. The whoredom is attributed to the face, the adultery to the breasts, because it is in these parts of the body that the want of chastity on the part of a woman is openly manifested, and in order to depict



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more plainly the boldness and shamelessness with which Israel practised idolatry.

The summons to repent is enforced by a reference to the punishment. V. 3. *“Lest I strip her naked, and put her as in the day of her birth, and set her like the desert, and make her like a barren land, and let her die with thirst.”* In the first hemistich the threat of punishment corresponds to the figurative representation of the adulteress; in the second it proceeds from the figure to the fact. In the marriage referred to, the husband had redeemed the wife out of the deepest misery, to unite himself with her. Compare Ezek. 16:4ff., where the nation is represented as a naked child covered with filth, which the Lord took to Himself, covering its nakedness with beautiful clothes and costly ornaments, and entering into covenant with it. These gifts, with which the Lord also presented and adorned His wife during the marriage, He would now take away from the apostate wife, and put her once more into a state of nakedness. The day of the wife’s birth is the time of Israel’s oppression and bondage in Egypt, when it was given up in helplessness to its oppressors. The deliverance out of this bondage was the time of the divine courtship; and the conclusion of the covenant with the nation that had been brought out of Egypt, the time of the marriage. The words, “I set (make) her like the desert,” are to be understood as referring not to the land of Israel, which was to be laid waste, but to the nation itself, which was to become like the desert, i.e., to be brought into a state in which it would be destitute of the food that is indispensable to the maintenance of life. The dry land is a land without water, in which men perish from thirst. There is hardly any need to say that these words do not refer to the sojourn of Israel in the Arabian desert; for there the Lord fed His people with manna from heaven, and gave them water to drink out of the rock.

**Hosea 2:4.** *“And I will not have compassion upon her children, for they are children of whoredom.”* This verse is also dependent, so far as the meaning is concerned, upon the *pen*

(lest) in v. 3; but in form it constitutes an independent sentence. *Bnē znūnīm* (sons of whoredoms) refers back to *yaldē znūnīm* in Hosea 1:2. The children are the members of the nation, and are called “sons of whoredom,” not merely on account of their origin as begotten in whoredom, but also because they inherit the nature and conduct of their mother. The fact that the children are specially mentioned after and along with the mother, when in reality mother and children are one, serves to give greater keenness to the threat, and guards against that carnal security, in which individuals imagine that, inasmuch as they are free from the sin and guilt of the nation as a whole, they will also be exempted from the threatened punishment.

**Hosea 2:5.** *“For their mother hath committed whoredom; she that bare them hath practised shame: for she said, I will go after my lovers, who give (me) my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.”* By *kī* (for) and the suffixes attached to *‘immâm* (their mother) and *hōrâthâm* (that bare them), the first clauses are indeed introduced as though simply explanatory and confirmatory of the last clause of v. 4; but if we look at the train of thought generally, it is obvious that v. 5 is not merely intended to explain the expression sons of whoredom, but to explain and vindicate the main thought, viz., that the children of whoredom, i.e., the idolatrous Israelites, will find no mercy. Now, as the mother and children are identical, if we trace back the figurative drapery to its actual basis, the punishment with which the children are threatened applies to the mother also; and the description of the mother’s whoredom serves also to explain the reason for the punishment with which the mother is threatened in v. 3. And this also accounts for the fact that, in the threat which follows in v. 6, “I hedge up thy way,” the other herself is again directly addressed. The *hiphil hōbhîsh*, which is traceable to *yâbhêsh*, so far as the form is concerned, but derives its meaning from *שׁוּב*, is not used here in its ordinary sense of being put to shame, but in the transitive

sense of practising shame, analogous to the transitive meaning “to shame,” which we find in 2 Sam. 19:5. To explain this thought, the coquetting with idols is more minutely described in the second hemistich. The delusive idea expressed by the wife (הַמְרִירָה, in the *perfect*, indicates speaking or thinking which stretches from the past into the present), viz., that the idols give her food (bread and water), clothing (wool and flax), and the delicacies of life (oil and drink, i.e., wine and must and strong drink), that is to say, “everything that conduces to luxury and superfluity,” which we also find expressed in Jer. 44:17, 18, arose from the sight of the heathen nations round about, who were rich and mighty, and attributed this to their gods. It is impossible, however, that such a thought can ever occur, except in cases where the heart is already estranged from the living God. For so long as a man continues in undisturbed vital fellowship with God, “he sees with the eye of faith the hand in the clouds, from which he receives all, by which he is guided, and on which everything, even that which has apparently the most independence and strength, entirely depends” (Hengstenberg).

**Hosea 2:6.** “Therefore (because the woman says this), behold, thus will I hedge up thy way with thorns, and wall up a wall, and she shall not find her paths.” The hedging up of the way, strengthened by the similar figure of the building of a wall to cut off the way, denotes her transportation into a situation in which she could no longer continue her adultery with the idols. The reference is to distress and tribulation (compare Hosea 5:15 with Deut. 4:30, Job 3:23; 19:8, Lam. 3:7), especially the distress and anguish of exile, in which, although Israel was in the midst of idolatrous nations, and therefore had even more outward opportunity to practise idolatry, it learned the worthlessness of all trust in idols, and their utter inability to help, and was thus impelled to reflect and turn to the Lord, who smites and heals (Hosea 6:1).

This thought is carried out still further in v. 7: “And she will pursue her lovers, and not overtake them; and seek them, and not find them: and will say, I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me than now.” Distress at first increases their zeal in idolatry, but it soon brings them to see that the idols afford no help. The failure to reach or find the lovers, who are sought with zeal (*riddēph, piel* in an intensive sense, to pursue eagerly), denotes the failure to secure what is sought from them, viz., the anticipated deliverance from the calamity, which the living God has sent as a punishment. This sad experience awakens the desire to return to the faithful covenant God, and the acknowledgment that prosperity and all good things are to be found in vital fellowship with Him.

The thought that God will fill the idolatrous nation with disgust at its coquetry with strange gods, by taking away all its possessions, and thus putting to shame its delusive fancy that the possessions which it enjoyed really came from the idols, is still further expanded in the second strophe, commencing with the eighth verse. V. 8. “And she knows not that I have given her the corn, and the must, and the oil, and have multiplied silver to her, and gold, which they have used for Baal.” Corn, must, and oil are specified with the definite article as being the fruits of the land, which Israel received from year to year. These possessions were the foundation of the nation’s wealth, through which gold and silver were multiplied. Ignorance of the fact that Jehovah was the giver of these blessings, was a sin. That Jehovah had given the land to His people, was impressed upon the minds of the people for all time, together with the recollection of the mighty acts of the Lord, by the manner in which Israel had been put in possession of Canaan; and not only had Moses again and again reminded the Israelites most solemnly that it was He who gave rain to the land, and multiplied and blessed its fruitfulness and its fruits (compare, for example, Deut. 7:13; 11:14, 15), but this was also perpetually called to their remembrance by the law concerning the offering of the first-

fruits at the feasts. The words *'āsū labba'al* are to be taken as a relative clause without *'asher*, though not in the sense of "which they have made into Baal," i.e., out of which they have made Baal-images (Chald., Rabb., Hitzig, Ewald, and others); for even though *הָשֵׁפַע* occurs in this sense in Isa. 44:17, the article, which is wanting in Isaiah, and also in Gen. 12:2 and Ex. 32:10, precludes such an explanation here, apart from the fact that *habba'al* cannot stand by itself for a statue of Baal. Here *הָשֵׁפַע* has rather the general meaning "apply to anything," just as in 2 Chron. 24:7, where it occurs in a perfectly similar train of thought. This use of the word may be obtained from the meaning "to prepare for anything," whereas the meaning "to offer," which Gesenius adopts ("which they have offered to Baal"), is untenable, since *הָשֵׁפַע* simply denotes the preparation of the sacrifice for the altar, which is out of the question in the case of silver and gold. They had applied their gold and silver to Baal, however, not merely by using them for the preparation of idols, but by employing them in the maintenance and extension of the worship of Baal, or even by regarding them as gifts of Baal, and thus confirming themselves in the zealous worship of that god. By *habba'al* we are not simply to understand the Canaanitish or Phoenician Baal in the stricter sense of the word, whose worship Jehu had exterminated from Israel, though not entirely, as is evident from the allusion to an *Asherah* in Samaria in the reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:6); but *Baal* is a general expression for all idols, including the golden calves, which are called other gods in 1 Kings 14:9, and compared to actual idols.

**Hosea 2:9.** "Therefore will I take back my corn at its time, and my must at its season, and tear away my wool and my flax for the covering of her nakedness." Because Israel had not regarded the blessings it received as gifts of its God, and used them for His glory, the Lord would take them away from it. *אֲשׁוּב וְלִקְחָתִי* are to be connected, so that *אֲשׁוּב* has the force of an adverb, not however in the sense of simple repetition, as it

usually does, but with the idea of return, as in Jer. 12:15, viz., to take again = to take back. "My corn," etc., is the corn, the must, which I have given. "At its time," i.e., at the time when men expect corn, new wine, etc., viz., at the time of harvest, when men feel quite sure of receiving or possessing it. If God suddenly takes away the gifts then, not only is the loss more painfully felt, but regarded as a punishment far more than when they have been prepared beforehand for a bad harvest by the failure of the crop. Through the manner in which God takes the fruits of the land away from the people, He designs to show them that He, and not Baal, is the giver and the taker also. The words "to cover her nakedness" are not dependent upon *הַצִּלְתִּי*, but belong to *וּפְשָׁתִי*, and are simply a more concise mode of saying, "Such serve, or are meant, to cover her nakedness." They serve to sharpen the threat, by intimating that if God withdraw His gifts, the nation will be left in utter penury and ignominious nakedness (*'ervâh, pudendum*).

**Hosea 2:10.** "And now will I uncover her shame before her lovers, and no one shall tear her out of my hand." The *ἀπ. λεγ. נִבְלִית*, lit., a withered state, from *נָבַל*, to be withered or faded, probably denotes, as Hengstenberg says, *corpus multa stupra passum*, and is rendered freely in the LXX by *ἀκαθαρσία*. "Before the eyes of the lovers," i.e., not so that they shall be obliged to look at it, without being able to avoid it, but so that the woman shall become even to them an object of abhorrence, from which they will turn away (comp. Nahum 3:5; Jer. 13:26). In this concrete form the general truth is expressed, that "whoever forsakes God for the world, will be put to shame by God before the world itself; and that all the more, the nearer it stood to Him before" (Hengstenberg). By the addition of the words "no one," etc., all hope is cut off that the threatened punishment can be averted (cf. Hosea 5:14).

This punishment is more minutely defined in vv. 11–13, in which the figurative drapery is thrown into the background by the actual fact.

V. 11. “*And I make all her joy keep holiday (i.e., cease), her feast, and her new moon, and her sabbath, and all her festive time.*” The feast days and festive times were days of joy, in which Israel was to rejoice before the Lord its God. To bring into prominence this character of the feasts, בְּלִמְשׁוּשָׁה, “all her joy,” is placed first, and the different festivals are mentioned afterwards. *Châg* stands for the three principal festivals of the year, the Passover, Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles, which had the character of *châg*, i.e., of feasts of joy *par excellence*, as being days of commemoration of the great acts of mercy which the Lord performed on behalf of His people. Then came the day of the new moon every month, and the Sabbath every week. Finally, these feasts are all summed up in בְּלִמְשׁוּשָׁה; מוֹעֲדִים, מוֹעֵד is the general expression for all festive seasons and festive days (Lev. 23:2, 4). As a parallel, so far as the facts are concerned, comp. Amos 8:10, Jer. 7:34, and Lam. 1:4; 5:15.

**Hosea 2:12.** The Lord will put an end to the festive rejoicing, by taking away the fruits of the land, which rejoice man’s heart. V. 12. “*And I lay waste her vine and her fig-tree, of which she said, They are lovers’ wages to me, which my lovers gave me; and I make them a forest, and the beasts of the field devour them.*” Vine and fig-tree, the choicest productions of the land of Canaan, are mentioned as the representatives of the rich means of sustenance with which the Lord had blessed His people (cf. 1 Kings 5:5; Joel 2:22, etc.). The devastation of both of these denotes the withdrawal of the possessions and enjoyments of life (cf. Jer. 5:17; Joel 1:7, 12), because Israel regarded them as a present from its idols. אֲתֵנָה, softened down from אֲתָנָן (Hosea 9:1), like שְׂרֵיָה, in Job 41:18, from שְׂרָיָן (1 Kings 22:34; cf. Ewald, § 163, *h*), signifies the wages of prostitution (Deut. 23:19). The derivation is disputed and uncertain, since the verb תָּנָה cannot be shown to have been used either in Hebrew or the other Semitic dialects in the sense of *dedit, dona porrexit* (Ges.), and the word cannot be traced to תָּנַן, to extend; whilst,

on the other hand, the verb תָּנָה, תִּנְנָה (Hosea 8:9, 10) is most probably a denominative of אֲתֵנָה. Consequently, Hengstenberg supposes it to be a bad word formed out of the question put by the prostitute, מַה תִּתֶּנְ לִי, and the answer given by the man, אֲתֵנְ לָךְ (Gen. 38:16, 18), and used in the language of the brothel in connection with an evil deed. The vineyards and fig-orchards, so carefully hedged about and cultivated, are to be turned into a forest, i.e., to be deprived of their hedges and cultivation, so that the wild beasts may be able to devour them. The suffixes attached to שְׂמָתִים and אֲכָלְתֶּם refer to גִּפְּזִן וְתֵאֵנָה (the vine and fig-tree), and not merely to the fruit. Comp. Isa. 7:23ff. and Mic. 3:12, where a similar figure is used to denote the complete devastation of the land.

**Hosea 2:13.** In this way will the Lord take away from the people their festivals of joy. V. 13. “*And I visit upon her the days of the Baals, to which she burned incense, and adorned herself with her ring and her jewels, and went after her lovers; and she hath forgotten me, is the word of Jehovah.*” The days of the Baals are the sacred days and festive seasons mentioned in v. 13, which Israel ought to have sanctified and kept to the Lord its God, but which it celebrated in honour of the Baals, through its fall into idolatry. There is no ground for thinking of special feast-days dedicated to Baal, in addition to the feasts of Jehovah prescribed by the law. Just as Israel had changed Jehovah into Baal, so had it also turned the feast-days of Jehovah into festive days of the Baals, and on those days had burned incense, i.e., offered sacrifice to the Baals (cf. Hosea 4:13; 2 Kings 17:11). In v. 8 we find only הִבְעֵל mentioned, but here בְּעָלִים in the plural, because Baal was worshipped under different modifications, from which *Bâlîm* came to be used in the general sense of the various idols of the Canaanites (cf. Judg. 2:11; 1 Kings 18:18, etc.). In the second hemistich this spiritual coquetry with the idols is depicted under the figure of the outward coquetry of a woman, who resorts to all kinds of outward

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ornaments in order to excite the admiration of her lovers (as in Jer. 4:30 and Ezek. 22:40ff.). There is no ground for thinking of the wearing of nose-rings and ornaments in honour of the idols. The antithesis to this adorning of themselves is “forgetting Jehovah,” in which the sin is brought out in its true shape. *On* נאם יהוה *On*, see Delitzsch on Isa. 1:24.

**Hosea 2:14, 15.** In v. 14 the promise is introduced quite as abruptly as in v. 1, that the Lord will lead back the rebellious nation step by step to conversion and reunion with Himself, the righteous God. In two strophes we have first the promise of their conversion (vv. 14–17), and secondly, the assurance of the renewal of the covenant mercies (vv. 18–23). Vv. 14, 15. *“Therefore, behold, I allure her, and lead her into the desert, and speak to her heart. And I give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor (of tribulation) for the door of hope; and she answers thither, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”* לָכֵן, therefore (not *utique*, *profecto*, but, nevertheless, which *lâkhên* in vv. 6 and 9, and is connected primarily with the last clause of v. 13. “Because the wife has forgotten God, He calls Himself to her remembrance again, first of all by punishment (vv. 6 and 9); then, when this has answered its purpose, and after she has said, I will go and return (v. 7), by the manifestations of His love” (Hengstenberg). That the first clause of v. 14 does not refer to the flight of the people out of Canaan into the desert, for the purpose of escaping from their foes, as Hitzig supposes, is sufficiently obvious to need no special proof. The alluring of the nation into the desert to lead it thence to Canaan, presupposes that rejection from the inheritance given to it by the Lord (viz., Canaan), which Israel had brought upon itself through its apostasy. This rejection is represented as an expulsion from Canaan to Egypt, the land of bondage, out of which Jehovah had redeemed it in the olden time. פָּתָהּ, in the *piel* to persuade, to decoy by words; here *sensu bono*, to allure by friendly words. The desert into which the Lord will lead His people

cannot be any other than the desert of Arabia, through which the road from Egypt to Canaan passes. Leading into this desert is not a punishment, but a redemption out of bondage. The people are not to remain in the desert, but to be enticed and led through it to Canaan, the land of vineyards. The description is typical throughout. What took place in the olden time is to be repeated, in all that is essential, in the time to come. Egypt, the Arabian desert, and Canaan are types. Egypt is a type of the land of captivity, in which Israel had been oppressed in its fathers by the heathen power of the world. The Arabian desert, as the intervening stage between Egypt and Canaan, is introduced here, in accordance with the importance which attached to the march of Israel through this desert under the guidance of Moses, as a period or state of probation and trial, as described in Deut. 8:2–6, in which the Lord humbled His people, training it on the one hand by want and privation to the knowledge of its need of help, and on the other hand by miraculous deliverance in the time of need (e.g., the manna, the stream of water, and the preservation of their clothing) to trust to His omnipotence, that He might awaken within it a heartfelt love to the fulfilment of His commandments and a faithful attachment to Himself. Canaan, the land promised to the fathers as an everlasting possession, with its costly productions, is a type of the inheritance bestowed by the Lord upon His church, and of blessedness in the enjoyment of the gifts of the Lord which refresh both body and soul. דַּבֵּר עַל לֵב, to speak to the heart, as applied to loving, comforting words (Gen. 34:3; 50:21, etc.), is not to be restricted to the comforting addresses of the prophets, but denotes a comforting by action, by manifestations of love, by which her grief is mitigated, and the broken heart is healed. The same love is shown in the renewed gifts of the possessions of which the unfaithful nation had been deprived.

In this way we obtain a close link of connection for v. 15. By נָתַתִּי ... מִשָּׁם, “I give from thence,” i.e., from the desert onwards, the thought is

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expressed, that on entering the promised land Israel would be put into immediate possession and enjoyment of its rich blessings. Manger has correctly explained מִשָּׁמַיִם as meaning “as soon as it shall have left this desert,” or better still, “as soon as it shall have reached the border.” “Its vineyards” are the vineyards which it formerly possessed, and which rightfully belonged to the faithful wife, though they had been withdrawn from the unfaithful (v. 12). The valley of *Achor*, which was situated to the north of Gilgal and Jericho (see at Josh. 7:26), is mentioned by the prophet, not because of its situation on the border of Palestine, nor on account of its fruitfulness, of which nothing is known, but with an evident allusion to the occurrence described in Josh. 7, from which it obtained its name of *Akhōr, Troubling*. This is obvious from the declaration that this valley shall become a door of hope. Through the sin of Achan, who took some of the spoil of Jericho which had been devoted by the ban to the Lord, Israel had fallen under the ban, so that the Lord withdrew His help, and the army that marched against Ai was defeated. But in answer to the prayer of Joshua and the elders, God showed to Joshua not only the cause of the calamity which had befallen the whole nation, but the means of escaping from the ban and recovering the lost favour of God. Through the name *Achor* this valley became a memorial, how the Lord restores His favour to the church after the expiation of the guilt by the punishment of the transgressor. And this divine mode of procedure will be repeated in all its essential characteristics. The Lord will make the valley of troubling a door of hope, i.e., He will so expiate the sins of His church, and cover them with His grace, that the covenant of fellowship with Him will no more be rent asunder by them; or He will so display His grace to the sinners, that compassion will manifest itself even in wrath, and through judgment and mercy the pardoned sinners will be more and more firmly and inwardly united to Him. And the church will respond to this movement on the part of the love of God, which reveals itself in justice and mercy. It will answer to the place, whence the

Lord comes to meet it with the fulness of His saving blessings. עָנָה does not mean “to sing,” but “to answer;” and שָׁמָּה, pointing back to מִשָּׁמַיִם, must not be regarded as equivalent to שָׁמָּה. As the comforting address of the Lord is a *sermo realis*, so the answer of the church is a practical response of grateful acknowledgment and acceptance of the manifestations of divine love, just as was the case in the days of the nation’s youth, i.e., in the time when it was led up from Egypt to Canaan. Israel then answered the Lord, after its redemption from Egypt, by the song of praise and thanksgiving at the Red Sea (Ex. 15), and by its willingness to conclude the covenant with the Lord at Sinai, and to keep His commandments (Ex. 24).

**Hosea 2:16.** “*And it comes to pass in that day, is the saying of Jehovah, thou wilt call, My husband; and thou wilt no more call to me, My Baal.*” The church will then enter once more into the right relation to its God. This thought is expressed thus, that the wife will no more call her husband Baal, but husband. *Ba’al* is not to be taken as an appellative in the sense of master, as distinguished from *’ish*, man, i.e., husband, for *ba’al* does not mean master or lord, but owner, possessor; and whenever it is applied to a husband in an appellative sense, it is used quite promiscuously with *’ish* (e.g., 2 Sam. 11:26, Gen. 20:3). Moreover, the context in this instance, especially the *B’alim* in v. 19, decidedly requires that *Ba’al* should be taken as a proper name. Calling or naming is a designation of the nature or the true relation of a person or thing. The church calls God her husband, when she stands in the right relation to Him; when she acknowledges, reveres, and loves Him, as He has revealed Himself, i.e., as the only true God. On the other hand, she calls Him Baal, when she places the true God on the level of the Baals, either by worshipping other gods along with Jehovah, or by obliterating the essential distinction between Jehovah and the Baals, confounding together the worship of God and idolatrous worship, the Jehovah-religion and heathenism.

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**Hosea 2:17.** *“And I put away the names of the Baals out of her mouth, and they are no more remembered by their name.”* As soon as the nation ceases to call Jehovah Baal, the custom of taking the names of the Baals into its mouth ceases of itself. And when this also is mentioned here as the work of God, the thought is thereby expressed, that the abolition of polytheism and mixed religion is a work of that divine grace which renews the heart, and fills with such abhorrence of the coarser or more refined forms of idolatry, that men no longer dare to take the names of the idols into their lips. This divine promise rests upon the command in Ex. 23:13, “Ye shall make no mention of the names of other gods,” and is repeated almost word for word in Zech. 13:2.

**Hosea 2:18.** With the complete abolition of idolatry and false religion, the church of the Lord will attain to the enjoyment of undisturbed peace. V. 18. *“And I make a covenant for them in that day with the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and the moving creatures of the earth: and I break in pieces bow, and sword, and battle out of the land, and cause them to dwell securely.”* God makes a covenant with the beasts, when He imposes the obligation upon them to hurt men no more. *“For them:” lâhem* is a *dat. comm.*, for the good of the favoured ones. The three classes of beasts that are dangerous to men, are mentioned here, as in Gen. 9:2. “Beasts of the field,” as distinguished from the same domestic animals (*bhēmâh*), are beasts that live in freedom in the fields, either wild beasts, or game that devours or injures the fruits of the field. By the “fowls of heaven,” we are to understand chiefly the birds of prey. *Remes* does not mean reptiles, but that which is active, the smaller animals of the land which move about with velocity. The breaking in pieces of the weapons of war and of battle out of the land, is a pregnant expression for the extinction not only of the instruments of war, but also of war itself, and their extermination from the land. *Milchâmâh*, war, is connected with *shâbhar per zeugma*. This promise rests upon Lev. 26:3ff., and is still further expanded

in Ezek. 34:25ff. (Compare the parallels in Isa. 2:4, 11; 35:9, and Zech. 9:10.)

**Hosea 2:19.** *“And I betroth thee to myself for ever; and I betroth thee to myself in righteousness, and judgment, and in grace and pity. V. 20. And I betroth thee to myself in faithfulness; and thou acknowledgest Jehovah.”* לוֹ אֶרְשָׁ לִי, to betroth to one’s self, to woo, is only applied to the wooing of a maiden, not to the restoration of a wife who has been divorced, and is generally distinguished from the taking of a wife (Deut. 20:7). דָּדָ אֶרְשָׁ לִי therefore points, as Calvin observes, to an entirely new marriage. “It was indeed great grace for the unfaithful wife to be taken back again. She might in justice have been put away for ever. The only valid ground for divorce was there, since she had lived for years in adultery. But the grace of God goes further still. The past is not only forgiven, but it is also forgotten” (Hengstenberg). The Lord will now make a new covenant of marriage with His church, such as is made with a spotless virgin. This new and altogether unexpected grace He now directly announces to her: “I betroth thee to myself;” and repeats this promise three times in ever fresh terms, expressive of the indissoluble character of the new relation. This is involved in לְעוֹלָם, “for ever,” whereas the former covenant had been broken and dissolved by the wife’s own guilt. In the clauses which follow, we have a description of the attributes which God would thereby unfold in order to render the covenant indissoluble. These are, (1) righteousness and judgment; (2) grace and compassion; (3) faithfulness. *Tsedeq = tsdâqâh* and *mishpât* are frequently connected. *Tsedeq*, “being right,” denotes subjective righteousness as an attribute of God or man; and *mishpât*, objective right, whether in its judicial execution as judgment, or in its existence in actual fact. God betroths His church to Himself in righteousness and judgment, not by doing her justice, and faithfully fulfilling the obligations which He undertook at the conclusion of the covenant (Hengstenberg), but by purifying her, through the medium of just judgment, from all the

unholiness and ungodliness that adhere to her still (Isa. 1:27), that He may wipe out everything that can injure the covenant on the part of the church. But with the existing sinfulness of human nature, justice and judgment will not suffice to secure the lasting continuance of the covenant; and therefore God also promises to show mercy and compassion. But as even the love and compassion of God have their limits, the Lord still further adds, "in faithfulness or constancy," and thereby gives the promise that He will not more withdraw His mercy from her. בְּאֵמֶת is also to be understood of the faithfulness of God, as in Ps. 89:25, not of that of man (Hengstenberg). This is required by the parallelism of the sentences. In the faithfulness of God the church has a certain pledge, that the covenant founded upon righteousness and judgment, mercy and compassion, will stand for ever. The consequence of this union is, that the church knows Jehovah. This knowledge is "real." "He who knows God in this way, cannot fail to love Him, and be faithful to Him" (Hengstenberg); for out of this covenant there flows unconquerable salvation.

**Hosea 2:21, 22.** "And it comes to pass in that day, I will hear, is the word of Jehovah; I will hear heaven, and it hears the earth. And the earth will hear the corn, and the new wine, and the oil; and they will hear Jezreel (God sows)." God will hear all the prayers that ascend to Him from His church (the first אֵמֶת is to be taken absolutely; compare the parallel in Isa. 58:9), and cause all the blessings of heaven and earth to flow down to His favoured people. By a prosopopeia, the prophet represents the heaven as praying to God, to allow it to give to the earth that which is requisite to ensure its fertility; whereupon the heaven fulfils the desires of the earth, and the earth yields its produce to the nation. In this way the thought is embodied, that all things in heaven and on earth depend on God; "so that without His bidding not a drop of rain falls from heaven, and the earth produces no germ, and consequently all nature would at length be barren, unless He gave it fertility by His

blessing" (Calvin). The promise rests upon Deut. 28:12, and forms the antithesis to the threat in Lev. 26:19 and Deut. 28:23, 24, that God will make the heavens as brass, and the earth as iron, to those who despise His name. In the last clause the prophecy returns to its starting-point with the words, "Hear Jezreel." The blessing which flows down from heaven to earth flows to *Jezreel*, the nation which "God sows." The name Jezreel, which symbolizes the judgment about to burst upon the kingdom of Israel, according to the historical signification of the name in Hosea 1:4, 11, is used here in the primary sense of the word, to denote the nation as pardoned and reunited to its God.

This is evident from the explanation given in v. 23: "And I sow her for myself in the land, and favour Unfavoured, and say to Not-my-people, Thou art my people; and it says to me, My God." זָרַע does not mean "to strew," or scatter (not even in Zech. 10:9; cf. Koehler on the passage), but simply "to sow." The feminine suffix to זָרַעְתִּיהָ refers, *ad sensum*, to the wife whom God has betrothed to Himself for ever, i.e., to the favoured church of Israel, which is now to become a true *Jezreel*, as a rich sowing on the part of God. With this turn in the guidance of Israel, the ominous names of the other children of the prophet's marriage will also be changed into their opposite, to show that mercy and the restoration of vital fellowship with the Lord will now take the place of judgment, and of the rejection of the idolatrous nation. With regard to the fulfilment of the promise, the remarks made upon this point at Hosea 1:11 and 2:1 (pp. 33, 34), are applicable here, since this section is simply a further expansion of the preceding one.

### Hosea 3

#### The Adulteress and Her Fresh Marriage—Ch. 3

**Hosea 3.** "The significant pair are introduced again, but with a fresh application." In a second symbolical marriage, the prophet sets forth the faithful, but for that very reason chastising and reforming, love of the Lord to rebellious and



adulterous Israel. By the command of God he takes a wife, who lives in continued adultery, notwithstanding his faithful love, and places her in a position in which she is obliged to renounce her lovers, that he may thus lead her to return. Vv. 1–3 contain the symbolical action; vv. 4, 5 the explanation, with an announcement of the reformation which this proceeding is intended to effect.

**Hosea 3:1.** *“And Jehovah said to me, Go again, and love a woman beloved of her companion, and committing adultery, as Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, and they turn to other gods, and love raisin-cakes.”* The purely symbolical character of this divine command is evident from the nature of the command itself, but more especially from the peculiar epithet applied to the wife. רַעַי is not to be connected with רַעַיִמָּר, in opposition to the accents, but belongs to רַעַי, and is placed first for the sake of emphasis. Loving the woman, as the carrying out of the divine command in v. 2 clearly shows, is in fact equivalent to taking a wife; and *’âhabh* is chosen instead of *lâqach*, simply for the purpose of indicating at the very outset the nature of the union enjoined upon the prophet. The woman is characterized as beloved of her companion (friend), and committing adultery. רַעַי denotes a friend or companion, with whom one cherishes intercourse and fellowship, never a fellow-creature generally, but simply the fellow-creature with whom one lives in the closest intimacy (Ex. 20:17, 18; 22:25, etc.). The רַעַי (companion) of a woman, who loves her, can only be her husband or paramour. The word is undoubtedly used in Jer. 3:1, 20, and Song of Sol. 5:16, with reference to a husband, but never of a fornicator or adulterous paramour. And the second epithet employed here, viz., “committing adultery,” which forms an unmistakable antithesis to אֶהְבֵּת רַעַי, requires that it should be understood in this instance as signifying a husband; for a woman only becomes an adulteress when she is unfaithful to her loving husband, and goes with other men, but not when she gives up her beloved

paramour to live with her husband only. If the epithets referred to the love shown by a paramour, by which the woman had annulled the marriage, this would necessarily have been expressed by the perfect or pluperfect. By the participles אֶהְבֵּת and תִּנְאָפֶת, the love of the companion and the adultery of the wife are supposed to be continued and contemporaneous with the love which the prophet is to manifest towards the woman. This overthrows the assertion made by Kurtz, that we have before us a woman who was already married at the time when the prophet was commanded to love her, as at variance with the grammatical construction, and changing the participle into the pluperfect. For, during the time that the prophet loved the wife he had taken, the רַעַי who displayed his love to her could only be her husband, i.e., the prophet himself, towards whom she stood in the closest intimacy, founded upon love, i.e., in the relation of marriage. The correctness of this view, that the רַעַי is the prophet as husband, is put beyond all possibility of doubt by the explanation of the divine command which follows. As Jehovah loves the sons of Israel, although or whilst they turn to other gods, i.e., break their marriage with Jehovah; so is the prophet to love the woman who commits adultery, or will commit adultery, notwithstanding his love, since the adultery could only take place when the prophet had shown to the woman the love commanded, i.e., had connected himself with her by marriage. The peculiar epithet applied to the woman can only be explained from the fact intended to be set forth by the symbolical act itself, and, as we have already shown at p. 22, is irreconcilable with the assumption that the command of God refers to a marriage to be really and outwardly consummated. The words וְיָהוָה פָּאֶהְבֵּת recal Deut. 7:8, and וְיָהוָה פָּנִים וְגוֹ' Deut. 31:18. The last clause, “and loving grape-cakes,” does not apply to the idols, who would be thereby represented either as lovers of grape-cakes, or as those to whom grape-cakes were offered (Hitzig), but is a continuation of פָּנִים,

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indicating the reason why Israel turned to other gods. Grape or raisin cakes (on *'āshishâh*, see at 2 Sam. 6:19) are delicacies, figuratively representing that idolatrous worship which appeals to the senses, and gratifies the carnal impulses and desires. Compare Job 20:12, where sin is figuratively described as food which is sweet as new honey in the mouth, but turns into the gall of asps in the belly. Loving grape-cakes is equivalent to indulging in sensuality. Because Israel loves this, it turns to other gods. “The solemn and strict religion of Jehovah is plain but wholesome food; whereas idolatry is relaxing food, which is only sought after by epicures and men of depraved tastes” (Hengstenberg).

**Hosea 3:2.** “*And I acquired her for myself for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer of barley, and a lethech of barley.*” אֶפְרָיִם, with *dagesh lene* or *dirimens* (Ewald, § 28, *b*), from *kârâh*, to dig, to procure by digging, then generally to acquire (see at Deut. 2:6), or obtain by trading (Job 6:27; 40:30). Fifteen *keseph* are fifteen shekels of silver; the word *shekel* being frequently omitted in statements as to amount (compare Ges. § 120, 4, Anm. 2). According to Ezek. 45:11, the *homer* contained ten baths or ephahs, and a *lethech* (ἡμίκοπος, LXX) was a half homer. Consequently the prophet gave fifteen shekels of silver and fifteen ephahs of barley; and it is a very natural supposition, especially if we refer to 2 Kings 7:1; 16:18, that at that time an ephah of barley was worth a shekel, in which case the whole price would just amount to the sum for which, according to Ex. 21:32, it was possible to purchase a slave, and was paid half in money and half in barley. The reason for the latter it is impossible to determine with certainty. The price generally, for which the prophet obtained the wife, was probably intended to indicate the servile condition out of which Jehovah purchased Israel to be His people; and the circumstance that the prophet gave no more for the wife than the amount at which a slave could be obtained, according to Ecc. 21:32 and Zech. 11:12, and that this amount was not even paid in money, but half of it in barley—a kind of food

so generally despised throughout antiquity (*vile hordeum*; see at Num. 5:15)—was intended to depict still more strikingly the deeply depressed condition of the woman. The price paid, moreover, is not to be regarded as purchase money, for which the wife was obtained from her parents; for it cannot be shown that the custom of purchasing a bride from her parents had any existence among the Israelites (see my *Bibl. Archäologie*, ii. § 109, 1). It was rather the marriage present (*mōhar*), which a bridegroom gave, not to the parents, but to the bride herself, as soon as her consent had been obtained. If, therefore, the woman was satisfied with fifteen shekels and fifteen ephahs of barley, she must have been in a state of very deep distress.

**Hosea 3:3.** “*And I said to her, Many days wilt thou sit for me: and not act the harlot, and not belong to a man; and thus will I also towards thee.*” Instead of granting the full conjugal fellowship of a wife to the woman whom he had acquired for himself, the prophet puts her into a state of detention, in which she was debarred from intercourse with any man. Sitting is equivalent to remaining quiet, and לֵי indicates that this is for the husband’s sake, and that he imposes it upon her out of affection to her, to reform her and grain her up as a faithful wife. הָיָה לְאִישׁ, to be or become a man’s, signifies conjugal or sexual connection with him. Commentators differ in opinion as to whether the prophet himself is included or not. In all probability he is not included, as his conduct towards the woman is simply indicated in the last clause. The distinction between זָנָה and הָיָה לְאִישׁ, is that the former signifies intercourse with different paramours, the latter conjugal intercourse; here adulterous intercourse with a single man. The last words, “and I also to thee” (towards thee), cannot have any other meaning, than that the prophet would act in the same way towards the wife as the wife towards every other man, i.e., would have no conjugal intercourse with her. The other explanations that have been given of these words, in which

*vgam* is rendered “and yet,” or “and then,” are arbitrary. The parallel is not drawn between the prophet and the wife, but between the prophet and the other man; in other words, he does not promise that during the period of the wife’s detention he will not conclude a marriage with any other woman, but declares that he will have no more conjugal intercourse with her than any other man. This thought is required by the explanation of the figure in v. 4. For, according to the former interpretation, the idea expressed would be this, that the Lord waited with patience and long-suffering for the reformation of His former nation, and would not plunge it into despair by adopting another nation in its place. But there is no hint whatever at any such thought as this in vv. 4, 5; and all that is expressed is, that He will not only cut off all intercourse on the part of His people with idols, but will also suspend, for a very long time, His own relation to Israel.

**Hosea 3:4.** *“For the sons of Israel will sit for many days without a king, and without a prince, and without slain-offering, and without monument, and without ephod and teraphim.”* The explanation of the figure is introduced with כִּי, because it contains the ground of the symbolical action. The objects, which are to be taken away from the Israelites, form three pairs, although only the last two are formally connected together by the omission of אֵין before תִּרְפִּים, so as to form one pair, whilst the rest are simply arranged one after another by the repetition of אֵין before every one. As king and prince go together, so also do slain-offering and memorial. King and prince are the upholders of civil government; whilst slain-offering and memorial represent the nation’s worship and religion. מִצֵּבָה, monument, is connected with idolatrous worship. The “monuments” were consecrated to Baal (Ex. 23:24), and the erection of them was for that reason prohibited even in the law (Lev. 26:1; Deut. 16:22: see at 1 Kings 14:23); but they were widely spread in the kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 3:2; 10:26–28; 17:10), and they were also

erected in Judah under idolatrous kings (1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 18:4; 23:14; 2 Chron. 14:2; 31:1). The *ephod* and *teraphim* did indeed form part of the apparatus of worship, but they are also specially mentioned as media employed in searching into the future. The *ephod*, the shoulder-dress of the high priest, to which the Urim and Thummim were attached, was the medium through which Jehovah communicated His revelations to the people, and was used for the purpose of asking the will of God (1 Sam. 23:9; 30:7); and for the same purpose it was imitated in an idolatrous manner (Judg. 17:5; 18:5). The *teraphim* were Penates, which were worshipped as the givers of earthly prosperity, and also as oracular deities who revealed future events (see my *Bibl. Archäol.* § 90). The prophet mentions objects connected with both the worship of Jehovah and that of idols, because they were both mixed together in Israel, and for the purpose of showing to the people that the Lord would take away both the Jehovah-worship and also the worship of idols, along with the independent civil government. With the removal of the monarchy (see at Hosea 1:4), or the dissolution of the kingdom, not only was the Jehovah-worship abolished, but an end was also put to the idolatry of the nation, since the people discovered the worthlessness of the idols from the fact that, when the judgment burst upon them, they could grant no deliverance; and notwithstanding the circumstance that, when carried into exile, they were transported into the midst of the idolaters, the distress and misery into which they were then plunged filled them with abhorrence of idolatry (see at Hosea 2:7).

This threat was fulfilled in the history of the ten tribes, when they were carried away with the Assyrian captivity, in which they continue for the most part to the present day without a monarchy, without Jehovah-worship, and without a priesthood. For it is evident that by Israel the ten tribes are intended, not only from the close connection between this prophecy and Hosea 1, where Israel is expressly distinguished from Judah (Hosea 1:7), but also from the prospect held out in v. 5, that the sons

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of Israel will return to David their king, which clearly points to the falling away of the ten tribes from the house of David. At the same time, as the carrying away of Judah also is presupposed in Hosea 1:7, 11, and therefore what is said of Israel is transferred *implicite* to Judah, we must not restrict the threat contained in this verse to the Israel of the ten tribes alone, but must also understand it as referring to the Babylonian and Roman exile of the Jews, just as in the time of king Asa (2 Chron. 15:2–4). The prophet Azariah predicted this to the kingdom of Judah in a manner which furnishes an unmistakably support to Hosea’s prophecy.

**Hosea 3:5.** *“Afterward will the sons of Israel turn and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and will go trembling to Jehovah and to His goodness at the end of the days.”* This section, like the previous one, closes with the announcement of the eventual conversation of Israel, which was not indicated in the symbolical action which precedes it, but is added to complete the interpretation of the symbol. Seeking Jehovah their God is connected with seeking David their king. For just as the falling away of the ten tribes from the royal house of David was merely the sequel and effect of their inward apostasy from Jehovah, and was openly declared in the setting up of the golden calves; the true return to the Lord cannot take place without a return to David their king, since God has promised the kingdom to David and his seed for ever (2 Sam. 7:13, 16), and therefore David is the only true king of Israel (*their* king). This King David, however, is no other than the Messiah. For although David received the promise of the everlasting continuance of his government, not with reference to his own person, but for his seed, i.e., his family; and on the ground of this promise, the whole of the royal house of David is frequently embraced under the expression “King David,” so that we might imagine that David is introduced here, not as an individual, but as signifying the Davidic family; yet we must not understand it on this account as referring to such historical representatives of the Davidic government as Zerubbabel, and other earthly representatives

of the house of David, since the return of the Israelites to “their King David” was not to take place till *’achārīth hayyāmīm* (the end of the days). For “the end of the days” does not denote the future generally, but always the closing future of the kingdom of God, commencing with the coming of the Messiah (see at Gen. 49:1; Isa. 2:2). *Pâchad ’el Yhōvâh*, to shake or tremble to Jehovah, is a pregnant expression for “to turn to Jehovah with trembling;” i.e., either trembling at the holiness of God, in the consciousness of their own sinfulness and unworthiness, or else with anguish and distress, in the consciousness of their utter helplessness. It is used here in the latter sense, as the two parallels, Hosea 5:15. “in their affliction they will seek me,” and Hosea 11:11, “they shall tremble as a bird,” etc., clearly show. This is also required by the following expression, *וְאֶל־טֹבוֹ*, which is to be understood, according to Hosea 2:7, as denoting the goodness of God manifested in His gifts. Affliction will drive them to seek the Lord, ad His goodness which is inseparable from Himself (Hengstenberg). Compare Jer. 31:12, where “the goodness of the Lord” is explained as corn, new wine, oil, lambs, and oxen, these being the gifts that come from the goodness of the Lord (Zech. 9:17; Ps. 27:13; 31:20). He who has the Lord for his God will want no good thing.

## II. THE UNGODLINESS OF ISRAEL. ITS PUNISHMENT, AND FINAL DELIVERANCE— CH. 4–14

**Hosea 4–14.** The spiritual adultery of Israel, with its consequences, which the prophet has exposed in the first part, and chiefly in a symbolical mode, is more elaborately detailed here, not only with regard to its true nature, viz., the religious apostasy and moral depravity which prevailed throughout the ten tribes, but also in its inevitable consequences, viz., the destruction of the kingdom and rejection of the people; and this is done with a repeated side-glance at Judah. To this there is appended a solemn appeal to return to the Lord, and a promise that the Lord will have compassion

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upon the penitent, and renew His covenant of grace with them.

#### Hosea 4

##### The Depravity of Israel, and Its Exposure to Punishment—Ch. 4–6:3

The first section, in which the prophet demonstrates the necessity for judgment, by exposing the sins and follies of Israel, is divided into two parts by the similar openings, “Hear the word of the Lord” in Hosea 4:1, and “Hear ye this” in Hosea 5:1. The distinction between the two halves is, that in Hosea 4 the reproof of their sins passes from Israel as a whole, to the sins of the priests in particular; whilst in Hosea 5 it passes from the ruin of the priesthood to the depravity of the whole nation, and announces the judgment of devastation upon Ephraim, and then closes in Hosea 6:1–3 with a command to return to the Lord. The contents of the two chapters, however, are so arranged, that it is difficult to divide them into strophes.

##### The Sins of Israel and the Visitation of God—Ch. 4

**Hosea 4:1–5.** Verses 1–5 form the first strophe, and contain, so to speak, the theme and the sum and substance of the whole of the following threatening of punishment and judgment. V. 1. “Hear the word of Jehovah, ye sons of Israel! for Jehovah has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land; for there is no truth, and no love, and no knowledge of God in the land.” Israel of the ten tribes is here addressed, as v. 15 clearly shows. The Lord has a controversy with it, has to accuse and judge it (cf. Mic. 6:2), because truth, love, and the knowledge of God have vanished from the land. *’Emeth* and *chesed* are frequently associated, not merely as divine attributes, but also as human virtues. They are used here in the latter sense, as in Prov. 3:3. “There is no *’emeth*, i.e., no truthfulness, either in speech or action, no one trusting another any more” (cf. Jer. 9:3, 4). *Chesed* is not human love generally, but love to inferiors, and to those who need help or compassionate love. Truth and love are mutually conditions, the one of the

other. “Truth cannot be sustained without mercy; and mercy without truth makes men negligent; so that the one ought to be mingled with the other” (Jerome). They both have their roots in the knowledge of God, of which they are the fruit (Jer. 22:16; Isa. 11:9); for the knowledge of God is not merely “an acquaintance with His nature and will” (Hitzig), but knowledge of the love, faithfulness, and compassion of God, resting upon the experience of the heart. Such knowledge not only produces fear of God, but also love and truthfulness towards brethren (cf. Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:12ff.). Where this is wanting, injustice gains the upper hand.

**Hosea 4:2.** “Swearing, and lying, and murdering, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break in, and blood reaches to blood.” The enumeration of the prevailing sins and crimes commences with *infin. absol.*, to set forth the acts referred to as such with the greater emphasis. *’Alâh*, to swear, in combination with *kichêsh*, signifies false swearing (= אָלוֹת שָׁוְרָה in Hosea 10:4; compare the similar passage in Jer. 7:9); but we must not on that account take *kichêsh* as subordinate to *’alâh*, or connect them together, so as to form one idea. Swearing refers to the breach of the second commandment, stealing to that of the eighth; and the infinitives which follow enumerate the sins against the fifth, the seventh, and the sixth commandments. With *pârâtsû* the address passes into the finite tense (Luther follows the LXX and Vulg., and connects it with what precedes; but this is a mistake). The perfects, *pârâtsû* and *nâgâ’û*, are not preterites, but express a completed act, reaching from the past into the present. *Pârâts* to tear, to break, signifies in this instance a violent breaking in upon others, for the purpose of robbery and murder, “*grassari* as פּרִיצִים, i.e., as murderers and robbers” (Hitzig), whereby one bloody deed immediately followed another (Ezek. 18:10). *Dâmîm*: blood shed with violence, a bloody deed, a capital crime.

**Hosea 4:3.** These crimes bring the land to ruin. V. 3. “Therefore the land mourns, and every

*dweller therein, of beasts of the field and birds of the heaven, wastes away; and even the fishes of the sea perish.*" These words affirm not only that the inanimate creation suffers in consequence of the sins and crimes of men, but that the moral depravity of men causes the physical destruction of all other creatures. As God has given to man the dominion over all beasts, and over all the earth, that he may use it for the glory of God; so does He punish the wickedness of men by pestilences, or by the devastation of the earth. The mourning of the earth and the wasting away of the animals are the natural result of the want of rain and the great drought that ensues, such as was the case in the time of Ahab throughout the kingdom of the ten tribes (1 Kings 17:18), and judging from Amos 1:2; 8:8, may have occurred repeatedly with the continued idolatry of the people. The verbs are not futures, in which case the punishment would be only threatened, but aorists, expressing what has already happened, and will continue still. כָּל-יוֹשֵׁב בָּהּ (every dweller therein): these are not the men, but the animals, as the further definition בְּחַיִּית וְגו' shows. הָ is used in the enumeration of the individuals, as in Gen. 7:21; 9:10. The fishes are mentioned last, and introduced with the emphasizing וְגַם, to show that the drought would prevail to such an extent, that even lakes and other waters would be dried up. הֵאָסַף, to be collected, to be taken away, to disappear or perish, as in Isa. 16:10; 60:20, Jer. 48:33.

**Hosea 4:4.** Notwithstanding the outburst of the divine judgments, the people prove themselves to be incorrigible in their sins. V. 4. *"Only let no man reason, and let no man punish; yet thy people are like priest-strivers."* הָאֵס is to be explained from the tacit antithesis, that with much depravity there would be much to punish; but this would be useless. The first clause contains a *desperatae nequitiae argumentum*. The notion that the second 'ish is to be taken as an object, is decidedly to be rejected, since it cannot be defended either

from the expression אִישׁ בְּאִישׁ in Isa. 3:5, or by referring to Amos 2:15, and does not yield any meaning at all in harmony with the second half of the verse. For there is no need to prove that it does not mean, "Every one who has a priest blames the priest instead of himself when any misfortune happens to him," as Hitzig supposes, since עַם signifies the nation, and not an individual. הַמְּמַדְּ is attached adversatively, giving the reason for the previous thought in the sense of "since thy people," or simply "thy people are surely like those who dispute with the priest." The unusual expression, priest-disputers, equivalent to quarrellers with the priest, an analogous expression to boundary-movers in Hosea 5:10, may be explained, as Luther, and Grotius, and others suppose, from the law laid down in Deut. 17:12, 13, according to which every law-suit was to be ultimately decided by the priest and judge as the supreme tribunal, and in which, whoever presumes to resist the verdict of this tribunal, is threatened with the punishment of death. The meaning is, that the nation resembled those who are described in the law as rebels against the priest (Hengstenberg, *Dissertations on Pentateuch*, vol. 1. p. 112, translation). The suffix "thy nation" does not refer to the prophet, but to the sons of Israel, the sum total of whom constituted their nation, which is directly addressed in the following verse.

**Hosea 4:5.** *"And so wilt thou stumble by day, and the prophet with thee will also stumble by night, and I will destroy thy mother."* Kâshal is not used here with reference to the sin, as Simson supposes, but for the punishment, and signifies to fall, in the sense of to perish, as in Hosea 14:2, Isa. 31:3, etc. הַיּוֹם is not to-day, or in the day when the punishment shall fall, but "by day," *interdiu*, on account of the antithesis לַיְלָה, as in Neh. 4:16. נְבִיא, used without an article in the most indefinite generality, refers to false prophets—not of Baal, however, but of Jehovah as worshipped under the image of a calf—who practised prophesying as a trade, and judging from 1 Kings 22:6, were very

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numerous in the kingdom of Israel. The declaration that the people should fall by day and the prophets by night, does not warrant our interpreting the day and night allegorically, the former as the time when the way of right is visible, and the latter as the time when the way is hidden or obscured; but according to the parallelism of the clauses, it is to be understood as signifying that the people and the prophets would fall at all times, by night and by day. "There would be no time free from the slaughter, either of individuals in the nation at large, or of false prophets" (Rosenmüller). In the second half of the verse, the destruction of the whole nation and kingdom is announced ('ēm is the whole nation, as in Hosea 2:2, Heb. 4).

**Hosea 4:6–10.** This thought is carried out still further in the second strophe, vv. 6–10. V. 6. *"My nation is destroyed for lack of knowledge; for thou, the knowledge hast thou rejected, and so do I reject thee from being a priest to me. Thou didst forget the law of thy God; thy sons will I also forget."* The speaker is Jehovah: my nation, that is to say, the nation of Jehovah. This nation perishes for lack of the knowledge of God and His salvation. *Hadda'ath* (the knowledge) with the definite article points back to *da'ath Elōhīm* (knowledge of God) in v. 1. This knowledge Israel might have drawn from the law, in which God had revealed His counsel and will (Deut. 30:15), but it would not. It rejected the knowledge and forgot the law of its God, and would be rejected and forgotten by God in consequence. In *'attâh* (thou) it is not the priests who are addressed—the custodians of the law and promoters of divine knowledge in the nation—but the whole nation of the ten tribes which adhered to the image-worship set up by Jeroboam, with its illegal priesthood (1 Kings 12:26–33), in spite of all the divine threats and judgments, through which one dynasty after another was destroyed, and would not desist from this sin of Jeroboam. The Lord would therefore reject it from being priest, i.e., would deprive it of the privilege of being a priestly nation (Ex. 19:6), would strip it of the privilege of being a priestly nation (Ex.

19:6), would strip it of its priestly rank, and make it like the heathen. According to Olshausen (*Heb. Gram.* p. 179), the anomalous form אַמַּאסֵּא is only a copyist's error for אַמַּאֲסֵּא; but Ewald (§ 247, e) regards it as an Aramaean pausal form. "Thy sons," the children of the national community, regarded as a mother, are the individual members of the nation.

**Hosea 4:7.** *"The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; their glory will I change into shame."* כְּרַבָּם, "according to their becoming great," does not refer to the increase of the population only (Hosea 9:11), but also to its growing into a powerful nation, to the increase of its wealth and prosperity, in consequence of which the population multiplied. The progressive increase of the greatness of the nation was only attended by increasing sin. As the nation attributed to its own idols the blessings upon which its prosperity was founded, and by which it was promoted (cf. Hosea 2:7), and looked upon them as the fruit and reward of its worship, it was strengthened in this delusion by increasing prosperity, and more and more estranged from the living God. The Lord would therefore turn the glory of Ephraim, i.e., its greatness or wealth, into shame. כְּבוֹדָם is probably chosen on account of its assonance with כְּרַבָּם. For the fact itself, compare Hosea 2:3, 9–11.

**Hosea 4:8.** *"The sin of my people they eat, and after their transgression do they lift up their soul."* The reproof advances from the sin of the whole nation to the sin of the priesthood. For it is evident that this is intended, not only from the contents of the present verse, but still more from the commencement of the next. *Chatta'th 'ammī* (the sin of my people) is the sin-offering of the people, the flesh of which the priests were commanded to eat, to wipe away the sin of the people (see Lev. 6:26, and the remarks upon this law at Lev. 10:17). The fulfilment of this command, however, became a sin on the part of the priests, from the fact that they directed their soul, i.e., their longing desire, to the transgression of the people; in other words,

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that they wished the sins of the people to be increased, in order that they might receive a good supply of sacrificial meat to eat. The prophet evidently uses the word *chattâ'th*, which signifies both sin and sin-offering, in a double sense, and intends to designate the eating of the flesh of the sin-offering as eating or swallowing the sin of the people. נָשָׂא נֶפֶשׁ אֶל, to lift up or direct the soul after anything, i.e., to cherish a longing for it, as in Deut. 24:15, etc. The singular suffix attached to *naphshō* (*his* soul) is to be taken distributively: “(they) every one his soul.”

**Hosea 4:9.** “Therefore it will happen as to the people so to the priest; and I will visit his ways upon him, and I repay to him his doing.” Since the priests had abused their office for the purpose of filling their own bellies, they would perish along with the nation. The suffixes in the last clauses refer to the priest, although the retribution threatened would fall upon the people also, since it would happen to the priest as to the people. This explains the fact that in v. 10 the first clause still applies to the priest; whereas in the second clause the prophecy once more embraces the entire nation.

**Hosea 4:10.** “They will eat, and not be satisfied; they commit whoredom, and do not increase: for they have left off taking heed to Jehovah.” The first clause, which still refers to the priests on account of the evident retrospect in וְאֶכְלוּ to יֹאכְלוּ in v. 8, is taken from the threat in Lev. 26:16. The following word *hiznū*, to practise whoredom (with the meaning of the *kal* intensified as in v. 18, not to seduce to whoredom), refers to the whole nation, and is to be taken in its literal sense, as the antithesis לֹא יִפְרְצוּ requires. *Pârats*, to spread out, to increase in number, as in Ex. 1:12 and Gen. 28:14. In the last clause לְשֹׁמֵר belongs to Jehovah: they have given up keeping Jehovah, i.e., giving heed to Him (cf. Zech. 11:11). This applies to the priests as well as to the people. Therefore God withdraws His blessing from both, so that those who eat are not satisfied,

and those who commit whoredom do not increase.

**Hosea 4:11–14.** The allusion to whoredom leads to the description of the idolatrous conduct of the people in the third strophe, vv. 11–14, which is introduced with a general sentence. V. 11. “Whoring and wine and new wine take away the heart (the understanding”). *Znūth* is licentiousness in the literal sense of the word, which is always connected with debauchery. What is true of this, namely, that it weakens the mental power, shows itself in the folly of idolatry into which the nation has fallen. V. 12. “My nation asks its wood, and its stick prophesies to it: for a spirit of whoredom has seduced, and they go away whoring from under their God.” שָׁאַל בַּיהוָה, to ask for a divine revelation of the idols made of wood (Jer. 10:3; Hab. 2:19), namely, the teraphim (cf. Hosea 3:4, and Ezek. 21:26). This reproof is strengthened by the antithesis *my* nation, i.e., the nation of Jehovah, the living God, and *its* wood, the wood made into idols by the people. The next clause, “and its stick is showing it,” sc. future events (*higgīd* as in Isa. 41:22, 23, etc.), is supposed by Cyril of Alexandria to refer to the practice of rhabdomancy, which he calls an invention of the Chaldaeans, and describes as consisting in this, that two rods were held upright, and then allowed to fall while forms of incantation were being uttered; and the oracle was inferred from the way in which they fell, whether forwards or backwards, to the right or to the left. The course pursued was probably similar to that connected with the use of the wishing rods. The people do this because a spirit of whoredom has besotted them.

By *rūäch znūnīm* the whoredom is represented as a demoniacal power, which has seized upon the nation. *Znūnīm* probably includes both carnal and spiritual whoredom, since idolatry, especially the Asherah-worship, was connected with gross licentiousness. The missing object to הִתְעָה may easily be supplied from the context. זִנָּה מֵאַחֲרַי, which differs from זִנָּה מִתַּחַת אֵל



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(Hosea 1:2), signifies “to whore away from under God,” i.e., so as to withdraw from subjection to God.

**Hosea 4:13.** This whoredom is still further explained in the next verse. V. 13. *“They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and upon the hills they burn incense, under oak and poplar and terebinth, for their shadow is good; therefore your daughters commit whoredom, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.”* Mountain-tops and hills were favourite places for idolatrous worship; because men thought, that there they were nearer to heaven and to the deity (see at Deut. 12:2). From a comparison of these and other passages, e.g., Jer. 2:20 and 3:6, it is evident that the following words, “under oak,” etc., are not to be understood as signifying that trees standing by themselves upon mountains and hills were selected as places for idolatrous worship; but that, in addition to mountains and hills, green shady trees in the plains and valleys were also chosen for this purpose. By the enumeration of the oak, the poplar (*libhneh*, the white poplar according to the Sept. *in loc.* and the Vulg. at Gen. 37:30, or the storax-tree, as the LXX render it at Gen. 37:30), and the terebinth, the frequent expression “under every green tree” (Deut. 12:2, 1 Kings 14:23, Jer. 2:20; 3:6) is individualized. Such trees were selected because they gave a good shade, and in the burning lands of the East a shady place fills the mind with sacred awe. עַל־כֵּן, therefore, on that account, i.e., not because the shadow of the trees invites to it, but because the places for idolatrous worship erected on every hand presented an opportunity for it; therefore the daughters and daughters-in-law carried on prostitution there. The worship of the Canaanitish and Babylonian goddess of nature was associated with prostitution, and with the giving up of young girls and women (compare Movers, *Phönizier*, i. pp. 583, 595ff.).

**Hosea 4:14.** *“I will not visit it upon your daughters that they commit whoredom, nor upon your daughters-in-law that they commit adultery; for they themselves go aside with*

*harlots, and with holy maidens do they sacrifice: and the nation that does not see is ruined.”* God would not punish the daughters and daughters-in-law for their whoredom, because the elder ones did still worse. “So great was the number of fornications, that all punishment ceased, in despair of any amendment” (Jerome). With כִּי הָיָה God turns away from the reckless nation, as unworthy of being further addressed or exhorted, in righteous indignation at such presumptuous sinning, and proceed to speak about it in the third person: for “*they* (the fathers and husbands, not ‘the priest,’ as Simson supposes, since there is no allusion to them here) go,” etc. פָּרַד, *piel* in an intransitive sense, to separate one’s self, to go aside for the purpose of being alone with the harlots. Sacrificing with the *qdēshōth*, i.e., with prostitutes, or *Hetairai* (see at Gen. 38:14), may have taken its rise in the prevailing custom, viz., that fathers of families came with their wives to offer yearly sacrifices, and the wives shared in the sacrificial meals (1 Sam. 1:3ff.). Coming to the altar with *Hetairai* instead of their own wives, was the climax of shameless licentiousness. A nation that had sunk so low and had lost all perception must perish. לָבַט = Arab. *lbṭ*: to throw to the earth; or in the *niphāl*, to cast headlong into destruction (Prov. 10:8, 10).

**Hosea 4:15.** A different turn is now given to the prophecy, viz., that if Israel would not desist from idolatry, Judah ought to beware of participating in the guilt of Israel; and with this the fourth strophe (vv. 15–19) is introduced, containing the announcement of the inevitable destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes. V. 15. *“If thou commit whoredom, O Israel, let not Judah offend! Come ye not to Gilgal, go not up to Bethaven, and swear ye not by the life of Jehovah.”* אָשָׁם, to render one’s self guilty by participating in the whoredom, i.e., the idolatry, of Israel. This was done by making pilgrimages to the places of idolatrous worship in that kingdom, viz., to *Gilgal*, i.e., not the Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan, but the northern Gilgal

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upon the mountains, which has been preserved in the village of Jiljilia to the south-west of Silo (Seilun; see at Deut. 11:30 and Josh. 8:35). In the time of Elijah and Elisha it was the seat of a school of the prophets (2 Kings 2:1; 4:38); but it was afterwards chosen as the seat of one form of idolatrous worship, the origin and nature of which are unknown (compare Hosea 9:15; 12:12; Amos 4:4; 5:5). *Bethaven* is not the place of that name mentioned in Josh. 7:2, which was situated to the south-east of Bethel; but, as Amos 4:4 and 5:5 clearly show, a name which Hosea adopted from Amos 5:5 for *Bethel* (the present *Beitin*), to show that *Bethel*, the house of God, had become *Bethaven*, a house of idols, through the setting up of the golden calf there (1 Kings 12:29). Swearing by the name of Jehovah was commanded in the law (Deut. 6:13; 10:20; compare Jer. 4:2); but this oath was to have its roots in the fear of Jehovah, to be simply an emanation of His worship. The worshippers of idols, therefore, were not to take it into their mouths. The command not to swear by the life of Jehovah is connected with the previous warnings. Going to Gilgal to worship idols, and swearing by Jehovah, cannot go together. The confession of Jehovah in the mouth of an idolater is hypocrisy, pretended piety, which is more dangerous than open ungodliness, because it lulls the conscience to sleep.

**Hosea 4:16.** The reason for this warning is given in vv. 16ff., viz., the punishment which will fall upon Israel. V. 16. *“For Israel has become refractory like a refractory cow; now will Jehovah feed them like a lamb in a wide field.”* סוֹרֵר, unmanageable, refractory (Deut. 21:18, cf. Zech. 7:11). As Israel would not submit to the yoke of the divine law, it should have what it desired. God would feed it like a lamb, which being in a wide field becomes the prey of wolves and wild beasts, i.e., He would give it up to the freedom of banishment and dispersion among the nations.

**Hosea 4:17.** *“Ephraim is joined to idols, let it alone.”* חֲבוּר עֲצָבִים, bound up with idols, so that it cannot give them up. Ephraim, the most

powerful of the ten tribes, is frequently used in the loftier style of the prophets for Israel of the ten tribes. הַנְּחִלֹּי, as in 2 Sam. 16:11, 2 Kings 23:18, let him do as he likes, or remain as he is. Every attempt to bring the nation away from its idolatry is vain. The expression *hannach-lō* does not necessitate the assumption, however, that these words of Jehovah are addressed to the prophets. They are taken from the language of ordinary life, and simply mean: it may continue in its idolatry, the punishment will not long be delayed.

**Hosea 4:18.** *“Their drinking has degenerated; whoring they have committed whoredom; their shields have loved, loved shame. V. 19. The wind has wrapt it up in its wings, so that they are put to shame because of their sacrifices.”* סָר from סוֹר, to fall off, degenerate, as in Jer. 2:21. סָרָה is probably strong, intoxicating wine (cf. Isa. 1:22; Nah. 1:10); here it signifies the effect of this wine, viz., intoxication. Others take *sâr* in the usual sense of departing, after 1 Sam. 1:14, and understand the sentence conditionally: “when their intoxication is gone, they commit whoredom.” But Hitzig has very properly object to this, that it is intoxication which leads to licentiousness, and not temperance. Moreover, the strengthening of *hiznū* by the *inf. abs.* is not in harmony with this explanation. The *hiphil* *hiznâh* is used in an emphatic sense, as in v. 10. The meaning of the last half of the verse is also a disputed point, more especially on account of the word הִבּוּ, which only occurs here, and which can only be the imperative of יָהַב (הִבּוּ for הִבּוּ), or a contraction of אָהַבּוּ. All other explanations are arbitrary. But we are precluded from taking the word as an imperative by קָלוּן, which altogether confuses the sense, if we adopt the rendering “their shields love ‘Give ye’—shame.” We therefore prefer taking הִבּוּ as a contraction of אָהַבּוּ, and אָהַבּוּ הִבּוּ as a construction resembling the peal form, in which the latter part of the fully formed verb is repeated, with the verbal person as an independent form (Ewald, § 120), viz., “their

shields loved, loved shame," which yields a perfectly suitable thought. The princes are figuratively represented as *shields*, as in Ps. 47:10, as the supporters and protectors of the state. They love shame, inasmuch as they love the sin which brings shame. This shame will inevitably burst upon the kingdom. The tempest has already seized upon the people, or wrapt them up with its wings (cf. Ps. 18:11; 104:3), and will carry them away (Isa. 57:13). צָרַר, literally to bind together, hence to lay hold of, wrap up. *Rūäch*, the wind, or tempest, is a figurative term denoting destruction, like רוּחַ אֲדָמָה in Hosea 13:15 and Ezek. 5:3, 4. אֲדָמָה refers to Ephraim represented as a woman, like the suffix attached to מְגִנֵּיהָ in v. 18. יְבֹשׁוּ מִזְבְּחוֹתָם to be put to shame on account of their sacrifices, i.e., to be deceived in their confidence in their idols (*bōsh* with *min* as in Hosea 10:6, Jer. 2:36; 12:13, etc.), or to discover that the sacrifices which they offered to Jehovah, whilst their heart was attached to the idols, did not save from ruin. The plural formation זְבָחוֹת only occurs here, but it has many analogies in its favour, and does not warrant our altering the reading into מְזַבְּחוֹתָם, after the Sept. ἐκ τῶν θυσιαστηρίων, as Hitzig proposes; whilst the inadmissibility of this proposal is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that there is nothing to justify the omission of the indispensable מִן, and the cases which Hitzig cites as instances in which *min* is omitted (viz., Zech. 14:10, Ps. 68:14, and Deut. 23:11) are based upon a false interpretation.

## Hosea 5

### The Judgment—Ch. 5–6:3

**Hosea 5:1–5.** With the words "Hear ye this," the reproof of the sins of Israel makes a new start, and is specially addressed to the priests and the king's house, i.e., the king and his court, to announce to the leaders of the nation the punishment that will follow their apostasy from God and their idolatry, by which they have

plunged the people and the kingdom headlong into destruction. Vv. 1–5 form the first strophe. V. 1. "Hear ye this, ye priests; and give heed thereto, O house of Israel; and observe it, O house of the king! for the judgment applies to you; for ye have become a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor." By the word "this," which points back to v. 4, the prophecy that follows is attached to the preceding one. Beside the priests and the king's house, i.e., the royal family, in which the counsellors and adjutants surrounding the king are probably included, the house of Israel, that is to say, the people of the ten tribes regarded as a family, is summoned to hear, because what was about to be announced applied to the people and kingdom as a whole. There is nothing to warrant our understanding by the "house of Israel," the heads of the nation or elders. *Lâkhem hammishpât* does not mean, It rests with you to know or to defend the right; nor, "Ye ought to hear the reproof," as Hitzig explains it, for *mishpât* in this connection signifies neither "the maintenance of justice" nor "a reproof," but the judgment about to be executed by God, τὸ κρίμα (LXX). The thought is this, The judgment will fall upon you; and *lâkhem* refers chiefly to the priests and the king's house, as the explanatory clause which follows clearly shows. It is impossible to determine with certainty what king's house is intended. Probably that of Zechariah or Menahem; possibly both, since Hosea prophesied in both reigns, and merely gives the quintessence of his prophetic addresses in his book. Going to Asshur refers rather to Menahem than to Zechariah (comp. 2 Kings 15:19, 20). In the figures employed, the bird-trap (*pach*) and the net spread for catching birds, it can only be the rulers of the nation who are represented as a trap and net, and the birds must denote the people generally who are enticed into the net of destruction and caught (cf. Hosea 9:8). *Mizpah*, as a parallel to Tabor, can only be the lofty *Mizpah* of Gilead (Judg. 10:17; 11:29) or Ramah-Mizpah, which probably stood upon the site of the modern es-Salt (see at Deut. 4:43); so that, whilst Tabor represents the land on this side of the Jordan,

Mizpah, which resembled it in situation, is chosen to represent the land to the east of the river. Both places were probably noted as peculiarly adapted for bird-catching, since Tabor is still thickly wooded. The supposition that they had been used as places of sacrifice in connection with idolatrous worship, cannot be inferred from the verse before us, nor is it rendered probable by other passages.

**Hosea 5:2.** This accusation is still further vindicated in vv. 2ff., by a fuller exposure of the moral corruption of the nation. V. 2. *“And excesses they have spread out deeply; but I am a chastisement to them all.”* The meaning of the first half of the verse, which is very difficult, and has been very differently interpreted by both ancient and modern expositors, has been brought out best by Delitzsch (Com. on Ps. 101:3), who renders it, “they understand from the very foundation how to spread out transgressions.” For the word שׁטִים the meaning transgressions is well established by the use of שׁטִים in Ps. 101:3, where Hengstenberg, Hupfeld, and Delitzsch all agree that this is the proper rendering (see Ewald’s philological defence of it at § 146, e). In the psalm referred to, however, the expression שׁטִים שָׂחָ also shows that *shachātâh* is the inf. *piel*, and *sētîm* the accusative of the object. And it follows from this that *shachātâh* neither means to slaughter or slaughter sacrifices, nor can be used for שׁחַתָּה in the sense of acting injuriously, but that it is to be interpreted according to the *shâchûth* in 1 Kings 10:16, 17, in the sense of stretching, stretching out; so that there is no necessity to take שׁחַתָּה in the sense of שׁחַתָּה, as Delitzsch does, though the use of עֲלֹהָ for עֲלֹהָ in Hosea 10:9 may no doubt be adduced in its support. שׁטִים, from שָׂחָ (to turn aside, Num. 5:12, 19), are literally digressions or excesses, answering to the *hiznâh* in v. 3, the leading sin of Israel. “They have deepened to stretch out excesses,” i.e., they have gone to great lengths, or are deeply sunken in excesses,—a thought quite in harmony with the context, to which the threat

is appended. “I (Jehovah) am a chastisement to them all, to the rulers as well as to the people;” i.e., I will punish them all (cf. v. 12), because their idolatrous conduct is well known to me. The way is thus prepared for the two following verses.

**Hosea 5:3.** *“I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou hast committed whoredom; Israel has defiled itself. V. 4. Their works do not allow to return to their God, for the spirit of whoredom is in them, and they know not Jehovah.”* By עֲתָהּ, the whoredom of Ephraim is designated as in fact lying before them, and therefore undeniable; but not, as Hitzig supposes, an act which has taken place once for all, viz., the choice of a king, by which the severance of the kingdoms and the previous idolatry had been sanctioned afresh. אֲשַׁמְטָה, defiled by whoredom, i.e., idolatry. Their works do not allow them to return to their God, because the works are merely an emanation of the character and state of the heart, and in their hearts the demon of whoredom has its seat (cf. Hosea 4:12), and the knowledge of the Lord is wanting; that is to say, the demoniacal power of idolatry has taken complete possession of the heart, and stifled the knowledge of the true God. The rendering, “they do not direct their actions to this,” is incorrect, and cannot be sustained by an appeal to the use of לֵב נָתַן לֵב in Judg. 15:1 and 1 Sam. 24:8ff., or to Judg. 3:28.

**Hosea 5:5.** *“And the pride of Ephraim will testify against its face, and Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their guilt; Judah has also stumbled with them.”* As the meaning “to answer,” to bear witness against a person, is well established in the case of עָנָה (cf. Num. 35:30, Deut. 19:18, and Isa. 3:9), and עָנָה בְּפָנַי also occurs in Job 16:8 in this sense, we must retain the same meaning here, as Jerome and others have done. And there is the more reason for this, because the explanation based upon the LXX, *καὶ ταπεινωθήσεται ἡ ὕβρις*, “the haughtiness of Israel will be humbled,” can hardly be reconciled with בְּפָנַי. “The pride of Israel,”

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moreover, is not the haughtiness of Israel, but that of which Israel is proud, or rather the glory of Israel. We might understand by this the flourishing condition of the kingdom, after Amos 6:8; but it would be only by its decay that this would bear witness against the sin of Israel, so that "the glory of Israel" would stand for "the decay of that glory," which would be extremely improbable. We must therefore explain "the glory of Israel" here and in Hosea 7:10 in accordance with Amos 8:7, i.e., we must understand it as referring to Jehovah, who is Israel's eminence and glory; in which case we obtain the following very appropriate thought: They know not Jehovah, they do not concern themselves about Him; therefore He Himself will bear witness by judgments, by the destruction of their false glory (cf. Hosea 2:10–14), against the face of Israel, i.e., bear witness to their face. This thought occurs without ambiguity in Hosea 7:10. Israel will stumble in its sin, i.e., will fall and perish (as in Hosea 4:5). Judah also falls with Israel, because it has participated in Israel's sin (Hosea 4:15).

**Hosea 5:6–10.** Israel, moreover, will not be able to avert the threatening judgment by sacrifices. Jehovah will withdraw from the faithless generation, and visit it with His judgments. This is the train of thought in the next strophe (vv. 6–10). V. 6. *"They will go with their sheep and their oxen to seek Jehovah, and will not find Him: He has withdrawn Himself from them.* V. 7. *They acted treacherously against Jehovah, for they have born strange children: now will the new moon devour them with their fields.*" The offering of sacrifices will be no help to them, because God has withdrawn Himself from them, and does not hear their prayers; for God has no pleasure in sacrifices which are offered in an impenitent state of mind (cf. Hosea 6:6; Isa. 1:11ff.; Jer. 7:21ff.; Ps. 50:7; 50:8ff.). The reason for this is given in v. 7. *Bâgad*, to act faithlessly, which is frequently applied to the infidelity of a wife towards her husband (e.g., Jer. 3:20; Mal. 2:14; cf. Ex. 21:8), points to the conjugal relation in which Israel stood to Jehovah. Hence the figure which follows. "Strange children" are such as do not

belong to the home (Deut. 25:5), i.e., such as have not sprung from the conjugal union. In actual fact, the expression is equivalent to **בְּנֵי זָנָוִים** in Hosea 1:2; 2:4, though *zâr* does not expressly mean "adulterous." Israel ought to have begotten children of God in the maintenance of the covenant with the Lord; but in its apostasy from God it had begotten an adulterous generation, children whom the Lord could not acknowledge as His own. "The new moon will devour them," viz., those who act so faithlessly. the meaning is not, "they will be destroyed on the next new moon;" but the new moon, as the festal season, on which sacrifices were offered (1 Sam. 20:6, 29; Isa. 1:13, 14), stands here for the sacrifices themselves that were offered upon it. The meaning is this: your sacrificial feast, your hypocritical worship, so far from bringing you salvation, will rather prove your sin. **חֶלְקֵיהֶם** are not sacrificial portions, but the hereditary portions of Israel, the portions of land that fell to the different families and households, and from the produce of which they offered sacrifices to the Lord.

**Hosea 5:8.** The prophet sees in spirit the judgment already falling upon the rebellious nation, and therefore addresses the following appeal to the people. V. 8. *"Blow ye the horn at Gibeah, the trumpet at Ramah! Raise the cry at Bethaven, Behind thee, Benjamin!"* The blowing of the *shôphâr*, a far-sounding horn, or of the trumpet (*châtsôtsrâh*), was a signal by which the invasion of foes (Hosea 8:1; Jer. 4:5; 6:1) and other calamities (Joel 2:1, cf. Amos 3:6) were announced, to give the inhabitants warning of the danger that threatened them. The words therefore imply that foes had invaded the land. *Gibeah* (of Saul; see at Josh. 18:28) and *Ramah* (of Samuel; see at Josh. 18:25) were two elevated places on the northern boundary of the tribe of Benjamin, which were well adapted for signals, on account of their lofty situation. The introduction of these particular towns, which did not belong to the tribe of Israel, but to that of Judah, is intended to intimate that the enemy has already conquered the kingdom of the ten

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tribes, and has advanced to the border of that of Judah. הָרִיעַ, to make a noise, is to be understood here as relating to the alarm given by the war-signals already mentioned, as in Joel 2:1, cf. Num. 10:9. *Bethaven* is Bethel (Beitin), as in Hosea 4:15, the seat of the idolatrous worship of the calves; and בָּיִת is to be taken in the sense of בְּבֵית (according to Ges. § 118, 1). The difficult words, “behind thee, Benjamin,” cannot indicate the situation or attitude of Benjamin, in relation to Bethel or the kingdom of Israel, or show that “the invasion is to be expected to start from Benjamin,” as Simson supposes. For the latter is no more appropriate in this train of thought than a merely geographical or historical notice. The words are taken from the ancient war-song of Deborah (Judg. 5:14), but in a different sense from that in which they are used there. There they mean that Benjamin marched behind Ephraim, or joined it in attacking the foe; here, on the contrary, they mean that the foe is coming behind Benjamin—that the judgment announced has already broken out in the rear of Benjamin. There is no necessity to supply “the enemy rises” behind thee, O Benjamin, as Jerome proposes, or “the sword rages,” as Hitzig suggests; but what comes behind Benjamin is implied in the words, “Blow ye the horn,” etc. What these signals announce is coming after Benjamin; there is no necessity, therefore, to supply anything more than “it is,” or “it comes.” The prophet, for example, not only announces in v. 8 that enemies will invade Israel, but that the hosts by which God will punish His rebellious people have already overflowed the kingdom of Israel, and are now standing upon the border of Judah, to punish this kingdom also for its sins. This is evident from vv. 9, 10, which contain the practical explanation of v. 8.

**Hosea 5:9.** *“Ephraim will become a desert in the day of punishment: over the tribes of Israel have I proclaimed that which lasts. V. 10. The princes of Judah have become like boundary-movers; upon them I pour out my wrath like water.”* The kingdom of Israel will entirely succumb to the punishment. It will become a desert—will be

laid waste not only for a time, but permanently. The punishment with which it is threatened will be נִאֲמָנָה. This word is to be interpreted as in Deut. 28:59, where it is applied to lasting plagues, with which God will chastise the obstinate apostasy of His people. By the perfect הוֹדֵרְתָּהּ, what is here proclaimed is represented as a completed event, which will not be altered. *Bshibhtē*, not in or among the tribes, but according to עָנָה בְּ, in v. 5, against or over the tribes (Hitzig). Judah also will not escape the punishment of its sins. The unusual expression *massīgē gbhūl* is formed after, and to be explained from Deut. 19:14, “Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour’s landmark;” or 27:17, “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour’s landmark.” The princes of Judah have become boundary-removers, not by hostile invasions of the kingdom of Israel (Simson); for the boundary-line between Israel and Judah was not so appointed by God, that a violation of it on the part of the princes of Judah could be reckoned a grievous crime, but by removing the boundaries of right which had been determined by God, viz., according to Hosea 4:15, by participating in the guilt of Ephraim, i.e., by idolatry, and therefore by the fact that they had removed the boundary between Jehovah and Baal, that is to say, between the one true God and idols. “If he who removes his neighbour’s boundary is cursed, how much more he who removes the border of his God!” (Hengstenberg). Upon such men the wrath of God would fall in its fullest measure. כַּמַּיִם, like a stream of water, so plentifully. For the figure, compare Ps. 69:25; 79:6, Jer. 10:25. Severe judgments are thus announced to Judah, viz., those of which the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser and Sennacherib were the instruments; but no ruin or lasting devastation is predicted, as was the case with the kingdom of Israel, which was destroyed by the Assyrians.

**Hosea 5:11–15.** From these judgments Israel and Judah will not be set free, until in their distress they seek their God. This thought is expanded in the next strophe (vv. 11–15). V. 11.

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*“Ephraim is oppressed, broken in pieces by the judgment; for it has wished, has gone according to statute.”* By the participles *’âshûq* and *râtsûts*, the calamity is represented as a lasting condition, which the prophet saw in the spirit as having already begun. The two words are connected together even in Deut. 28:33, to indicate the complete subjection of Israel to the power and oppression of its foes, as a punishment for falling away from the Lord. *Rtsûts mishpât* does not mean “of broken right,” or “injured in its right” (Ewald and Hitzig), but “broken in pieces by the judgment” (of God), with a *genitivum efficientis*, like *mukkêh Elôhîm* in Isa. 53:4. For it liked to walk according to statute. For *הִלְךְ אַחֲרַי* compare Jer. 2:5 and 2 Kings 18:15. *Tsav* is a human statute; it stands both here and in Isa. 28:10, 13, the only other passages in which it occurs, as an antithesis to the word or commandment of God. The statute intended is the one which the kingdom of Israel upheld from beginning to end, viz., the worship of the calves, that root of all the sins, which brought about the dissolution and ruin of the kingdom.

**Hosea 5:12.** *“And I am like the moth to Ephraim, and like the worm to the house of Judah.”* The moth and worm are figures employed to represent destructive powers; the moth destroying clothes (Isa. 50:9; 51:8; Ps. 39:12), the worm injuring both wood and flesh. They are both connected again in Job 13:28, as things which destroy slowly but surely, to represent, as Calvin says, *lenta Dei judicium*. God becomes a destructive power to the sinner through the thorn of conscience, and the chastisements which are intended to effect his reformation, but which lead inevitably to his ruin when he hardens himself against them. The preaching of the law by the prophets sharpened the thorn in the conscience of Israel and Judah. The chastisement consisted in the infliction of the punishments threatened in the law, viz., in plagues and invasions of their foes.

**Hosea 5:13.** The two kingdoms could not defend themselves against this chastisement by the help of any earthly power. V. 13. *“And*

*Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his abscess; and Ephraim went to Asshur, and sent to king Jareb (striver): but he cannot cure you, nor drive the abscess away from you.”* By the imperfects, with *Vav rel.*, *וַיִּרְא, וַיִּשְׁלַח*, the attempts of Ephraim and Judah to save themselves from destruction are represented as the consequence of the coming of God to punish, referred to in v. 12. Inasmuch as this is to be seen, so far as the historical fulfilment is concerned, not in the present, but in the past and future, the attempts to obtain a cure for the injuries also belong to the present (? past) and future. *Mâzôr* does not mean a bandage or the cure of injuries (Ges., Dietr.), but is derived from *זָרַר*, to squeeze out (see Del. on Isa. 1:6), and signifies literally that which is pressed out, i.e., a festering wound, an abscess. It has this meaning not only here, but also in Jer. 30:13, from which the meaning bandage has been derived. On the figure employed, viz., the disease of the body politic, see Delitzsch on Isa. 1:5, 6. That this disease is not to be sought for specially in anarchy and civil war (Hitzig), is evident from the simple fact, that Judah, which was saved from these evils, is described as being just as sick as Ephraim. The real disease of the two kingdoms was apostasy from the Lord, or idolatry with its train of moral corruption, injustice, crimes, and vices of every kind, which destroyed the vital energy and vital marrow of the two kingdoms, and generated civil war and anarchy in the kingdom of Israel. Ephraim sought for help from the Assyrians, viz., from king *Jareb*, but without obtaining it. The name *Jareb*, i.e., warrior, which occurs here and at Hosea 10:6, is an epithet formed by the prophet himself, and applied to the king of Assyria, not of Egypt, as Theodoret supposes. The omission of the article from *מֶלֶךְ* may be explained from the fact that *Jârêbh* is, strictly speaking, an appellative, as in *לְמוֹאָל מֶלֶךְ* in Prov. 31:1. We must not supply *Yhūdâh* as the subject to *vayyishlach*. The omission of any reference to Judah in the second half of the verse, may be accounted for from the fact that the prophecy had primarily and principally to do with Ephraim, and that

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Judah was only cursorily mentioned. The ὄπ. λεγ. יגָהָהּ from גָּהָהּ, in Syriac to by shy, to flee, is used with *min* in the tropical sense of removing or driving away.

**Hosea 5:14–15.** No help is to be expected from Assyria, because the Lord will punish His people. V. 14. “For I am like a lion to Ephraim, and like the young lion to the house of Judah: I, I tear in pieces, and go; I carry away, and there is no deliverer. V. 15. “b go, return to my place, till they repent and shall seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me early.” For the figure of the lion, which seizes its prey, and tears it in pieces without deliverance, see Hosea 13:7 and Isa. 5:29. אָשָׂא denotes the carrying away of booty, as in 1 Sam. 17:34. For the fact itself, compare Deut. 32:39. The first clause of v. 15 is still to be interpreted from the figure of the lion. As the lion withdraws into its cave, so will the Lord withdraw into His own place, viz., heaven, and deprive the Israelites of His gracious, helpful presence, until they repent, i.e., not only feel themselves guilty, but feel the guilt by bearing the punishment. Suffering punishment awakens the need of mercy, and impels them to seek the face of the Lord. The expression, “in the distress to them,” recalls בָּצָר לָהֶם in Deut. 4:30. *Shichēr* is to be taken as a denom. of *shachar*, the morning dawn (Hosea 6:3), in the sense of early, i.e., zealously, urgently, as the play upon the word כָּשָׁחַר in Hosea 6:3 *unmistakeably* shows. For the fact itself, compare Hosea 2:9 and Deut. 4:29, 30.

## Hosea 6

**Hosea 6:1–3.** To this threat the prophet appends in the concluding strophe, both the command to return to the Lord, and the promise that the Lord will raise His smitten nation up again, and quicken them anew with His grace. The separation of these three verses from the preceding one, by the division of the chapters, is at variance with the close connection in the actual contents, which is so perfectly obvious in the allusion made in the words of v. 1, “Come, and let us return,” to those

of Hosea 5:15, “I will go, and return,” and in טָרָה וַיִּרְפְּאוּנוּ (v. 1) to the similar words in Hosea 5:13b and 14. V. 1. “Come, and let us return to Jehovah: for He has torn in pieces, and will heal us; He has smitten, and will bind us up. V. 2. He will quicken us after two days; on the third He will raise us up, that we may live before Him.” The majority of commentators, following the example of the Chald. and Septuagint, in which לָאֲמַר, λέγοντες, is interpolated before לָכֵן, have taken the first three verses as an appeal to return to the Lord, addressed by the Israelites in exile to one another. But it would be more simple, and more in harmony with the general style of Hosea, which is characterized by rapid transitions, to take the words as a call addressed by the prophet in the name of the exile. The promise in v. 3 especially is far more suitable to a summons of this kind, than to an appeal addressed by the people to one another. As the endurance of punishment impels to seek the Lord (Hosea 5:15), so the motive to return to the Lord is founded upon the knowledge of the fact that the Lord can, and will, heal the wounds which He inflicts. The preterite *târaph*, as compared with the future *’etrōph* in Hosea 5:14, presupposes that the punishment has already begun. The following וַיִּרְפְּאוּנוּ is also a preterite with the *Vav consec.* omitted. The Assyrian cannot heal (Hosea 5:13); but the Lord, who manifested Himself as Israel’s physician in the time of Moses (Ex. 15:26), and promised His people healing in the future also (Deut. 32:39), surely can. The allusion in the word וַיִּרְפְּאוּנוּ to this passage of Deuteronomy, is placed beyond all doubt by v. 2. The words, “He revives after two days,” etc., are merely a special application of the general declaration, “I kill, and make alive” (Deut. 32:39), to the particular case in hand. What the Lord there promises to all His people, He will also fulfil upon the ten tribes of Israel. By the definition “after two days,” and “on the third day,” the speedy and certain revival of Israel is set before them. Two and three days are very short periods of time; and the linking together of two



numbers following one upon the other, expresses the certainty of what is to take place within this space of time, just as in the so-called numerical sayings in Amos 1:3, Job 5:19, Prov. 6:16; 30:15, 18, in which the last and greater number expresses the highest or utmost that is generally met with. הַקִּים, to raise the dead (Job 14:12; Ps. 88:11; Isa. 26:14, 19). "That we may live before Him:" i.e., under His sheltering protection and grace (cf. Gen. 17:18). The earlier Jewish and Christian expositors have taken the numbers, "after two days, and on the third day," chronologically. The Rabbins consequently suppose the prophecy to refer either to the three captivities, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Roman, which has not ended yet; or to the three periods of the temple of Solomon, of that of Zerubbabel, and of the one to be erected by the Messiah. Many of the fathers, on the other hand, and many of the early Lutheran commentators, have found in them a prediction of the death of Christ and His resurrection on the third day. Compare, for example, *Calovii Bibl. illustr. ad h. l.*, where this allusion is defended by a long series of undeniably weak arguments, and where a fierce attack is made, not only upon Calvin, who understood these words as "referring to the liberation of Israel from captivity, and the restoration of the church after two days, i.e., in a very short time;" but also upon Grotius, who found, in addition to the immediate historical allusion to the Israelites, whom God would soon liberate from their death-like misery after their conversion, a foretype, in consequence of a special divine indication, of the time "within which Christ would recover His life, and the church its hope." But any direct allusion in the hope here uttered to the death and resurrection of Christ, is proved to be untenable by the simple words and their context. The words primarily hold out nothing more than the quickening of Israel out of its death-like state of rejection from the face of God, and that in a very short period after its conversion to the Lord. This restoration to life cannot indeed be understood as referring to the return of the exiles to their earthly fatherland; or, at all

events, it cannot be restricted to this. It does not occur till after the conversion of Israel to the Lord its God, on the ground of faith in the redemption effected through the atoning death of Christ, and His resurrection from the grave; so that the words of the prophet may be applied to this great fact in the history of salvation, but without its being either directly or indirectly predicted. Even the resurrection of the dead is not predicted, but simply the spiritual and moral restoration of Israel to life, which no doubt has for its necessary complement the reawakening of the physically dead. And, in this sense, our passage may be reckoned among the prophetic utterances which contain the germ of the hope of a life after death, as in Isa. 26:19–21, and in the vision of Ezekiel in Ezek. 37:1–14. That it did not refer to this in its primary sense, and so far as its historical fulfilment was concerned, is evident from the following verse. V. 3. "Let us therefore know, hunt after the knowledge of Jehovah. His rising is fixed like the morning dawn, that He may come to us like the rain, and moisten the earth like the latter rain." וְנִדְעָה נֵר corresponds to לְכוּ וְנִשׁוּבָה in v. 1. The object to נדעה is אֶת־יְהוָה, and נדעה is merely strengthened by the addition of לְדַעַת. The knowledge of Jehovah, which they would hunt after, i.e., strive zealously to obtain, is a practical knowledge, consisting in the fulfilment of the divine commandments, and in growth in the love of God with all the heart. This knowledge produces fruit. The Lord will rise upon Israel like the morning dawn, and come down upon it like fertilizing rain. מוֹצֵאוֹ, His (i.e., Jehovah's) rising, is to be explained from the figure of the dawn (for יָצָא applied to the rising of the sun, see Gen. 19:23 and Ps. 19:7). The dawn is mentioned instead of the sun, as the herald of the dawning day of salvation (compare Isa. 58:8 and 60:2). This salvation which dawns when the Lord appears, is represented in the last clause as a shower of rain that fertilizes the land. יוֹרֵה is hardly a *kal* participle, but rather the imperfect *hiphil* in the sense of sprinkling. In Deut. 11:14 (cf. 28:12

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and Lev. 26:4, 5), the rain, or the early and latter rain, is mentioned among the blessings which the Lord will bestow upon His people, when they serve Him with all the heart and soul. This promise the Lord will so fulfil in the case of His newly quickened nation, that He Himself will refresh it like a fertilizing rain. This will take place through the Messiah, as Ps. 72:6 and 2 Sam. 23:4 clearly show.

### The Ripeness of Israel for the Judgment of Destruction—Ch. 6:4–11:11

**Hosea 6:4–11:11.** Just as, in the middle section of the first part of our book (Hosea 2:2–23), the symbolical announcements of judgment contained in Hosea 1 were more fully elaborated and explained; so again, in the second part, after the shorter description of the corruption and culpability of Israel contained in Hosea 4, 5, we find in the second or middle section, viz., Hosea 6:4–11:11, a longer account both of the religious apostasy and moral corruption which have become so injurious, and also of the judgment about to fall upon the sinful kingdom and people. In this, the condemnation of sin and threatening of punishment follow one another throughout; but in such a way that in this longer exposition the progressive development of these truths is clearly indicated in the fact, that in the first section (Hosea 6:4–7:16) the description of the religious and moral degradation of the nation and its princes prevails; in the second (Hosea 8:1–9:9) the threatening of judgment comes into the foreground; and in the third (Hosea 9:10–11:11) evidence is adduced, how, from time immemorial, Israel has resisted the gracious guidance of God, so that nothing but the compassion of God can preserve it from utter annihilation. Each of these divisions may be subdivided again into three strophes.

### The Incurableness of the Corruption—Ch. 6:4–7:16

**Hosea 6:4–11.** The prophet's address commences afresh, as in Hosea 2:4, without any introduction, with the denunciation of the

incurability of the Israelites. Vv. 4–11 form the first strophe. V. 4. *“What shall I do to thee, Ephraim? what shall I do to thee, Judah? for your love is like the morning cloud, and like the dew which quickly passes away.”* That this verse is not to be taken in connection with the preceding one, as it has been by Luther (“how shall I do such good to thee?”) and by many of the earlier expositors, is evident from the substance of the verse itself. For *’âsâh*, in the sense of doing good, is neither possible in itself, nor reconcilable with the explanatory clause which follows. The *chesed*, which is like the morning cloud, cannot be the grace of God; for a morning cloud that quickly vanishes away, is, according to Hosea 13:3, a figurative representation of that which is evanescent and perishable. The verse does not contain an answer from Jehovah, “who neither receives nor repels the penitent, because though they love God it is only with fickleness,” as Hitzig supposes; but rather the thought, that God has already tried all kinds of punishment to bring the people back to fidelity to Himself, but all in vain (cf. Isa. 1:5, 6), because the piety of Israel is as evanescent and transient as a morning cloud, which is dispersed by the rising sun. Judging from the *chesed* in v. 6, *chaskhem* is to be understood as referring to good-will towards other men flowing out of love to God (see at Hosea 4:1).

**Hosea 6:5.** *“Therefore have I hewn by the prophets, slain them by the words of my mouth: and my judgment goeth forth as light.”* *’Al-kên*, therefore, because your love vanishes again and again, God must perpetually punish.  $\text{כָּ \text{וַיִּצַק}}$  does not mean to strike in among the prophets (Hitzig, after the LXX, Syr., and others); but  $\text{כָּ}$  is instrumental, as in Isa. 10:15, and *châtsabh* signifies to hew, not merely to hew off, but to hew out or carve. The *nbhî’îm* cannot be false prophets, on account of the parallel “by the words of my mouth,” but must be the true prophets. Through them God had hewed or carved the nation, or, as Jerome and Luther render it, *dolavi*, i.e., worked it like a piece of hard wood, in other words, had tried to

improve it, and shape it into a holy nation, answering to its true calling. "Slain by the words of my mouth," which the prophets had spoken; i.e., not merely caused death and destruction to be proclaimed to them, but suspended judgment and death over them—as, for example, by Elijah—since there dwells in the word of God the power to kill and to make alive (compare Isa. 11:4; 49:2). The last clause, according to the Masoretic pointing and division of the words, does not yield any appropriate meaning. **מִשְׁפָּטֵי** could only be the judgments inflicted upon the nation; but neither the singular suffix **ָ** for **כֶּם** (v. 4), nor **אֹר** **יָצָא**, with the singular verb under the **ָ** *simil.* omitted before **אֹר**, suits this explanation. For **אֹר יָצָא** cannot mean "to go forth to the light;" nor can **אֹר** stand for **לְאֹר**. We must therefore regard the reading expressed by the ancient versions, viz., **מִשְׁפָּטֵי כְּאֹר יָצָא**, "my judgment goeth forth like light," as the original one. My penal judgment went forth like the light (the sun); i.e., the judgment inflicted upon the sinners was so obvious, so conspicuous (clear as the sun), that every one ought to have observed it and laid it to heart (cf. Zeph. 3:5). The Masoretic division of the words probably arose simply from an unsuitable reminiscence of Ps. 37:6.

**Hosea 6:6-7.** The reason why God was obliged to punish in this manner is given in the following verses. V. 6. *"For I take pleasure in love, and not in sacrifices; and in the knowledge of God more than in burnt-offerings. V. 7. But they have transgressed the covenant like Adam: there have they acted treacherously towards me."* *Chesed* is love to one's neighbour, manifesting itself in righteousness, love which has its roots in the knowledge of God, and therefore is connected with "the knowledge of God" here as in Hosea 4:1. For the thought itself, compare the remarks on the similar declaration made by the prophet Samuel in 1 Sam. 15:22; and for parallels as to the fact, see Isa. 1:11-17, Mic. 6:8, Ps. 40:7-9, and Ps. 50:8ff.

in all which passages it is not sacrifices in themselves, but simply the heartless sacrifices with which the wicked fancied they could cover their sins, that are here rejected as displeasing to God, and as abominations in His eyes. This is apparent also from the antithesis in v. 7, viz., the reproof of their transgression of the covenant. **הֵמָּה** (they) are Israel and Judah, not the priests, whose sins are first referred to in v. 9. **כְּאָדָם**, not "after the manner of men," or "like ordinary men,"—for this explanation would only be admissible if **הֵמָּה** referred to the priests or prophets, or if a contrast were drawn between the rulers and others, as in Ps. 82:7, — but "like Adam," who transgressed the commandment of God, that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge. This command was actually a covenant, which God made with him, since the object of its was the preservation of Adam in vital fellowship with the Lord, as was the case with the covenant that God made with Israel (see Job 31:33, and Delitzsch's Commentary). The local expression "there," points to the place where the faithless apostasy had occurred, as in Ps. 14:5. This is not more precisely defined, but refers no doubt to Bethel as the scene of the idolatrous worship. There is no foundation for the temporal rendering "then."

**Hosea 6:8-9.** The prophet cites a few examples in proof of this faithlessness in the two following verses. V. 8. *"Gilead is a city of evil-doers, trodden with blood. V. 9. And like the lurking of the men of the gangs is the covenant of the priests; along the way they murder even to Sichem: yea, they have committed infamy."* *Gilead* is not a city, for no such city is mentioned in the Old Testament, and its existence cannot be proved from Judg. 12:7 and 10:17, any more than from Gen. 31:48, 49, but it is the name of a district, as it is everywhere else; and here in all probability it stands, as it very frequently does, for the whole of the land of Israel to the east of the Jordan. Hosea calls Gilead a city of evil-doers, as being a rendezvous for wicked men, to express the thought that the whole land was as

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full of evil-doers as a city is of men. עֲקֵבָהּ: a denom. of עָקַב, a footstep, signifying marked with traces, full of traces of blood, which are certainly not to be understood as referring to idolatrous sacrifices, as Schmieder imagines, but which point to murder and bloodshed. It is quite as arbitrary, however, on the part of Hitzig to connect it with the murder of Zechariah, or a massacre associated with it, as it is on the part of Jerome and others to refer it to the deeds of blood by which Jehu secured the throne. The bloody deeds of Jehu took place in Jezreel and Samaria (2 Kings 9, 10), and it was only by a false interpretation of the epithet applied to Shallum, viz., *Ben-yâbhēsh*, as signifying citizens of Jabesh, that Hitzig was able to trace a connection between it and Gilead.

**Hosea 6:9.** In these crimes the priests take the lead. Like highway robbers, they form themselves into gangs for the purpose of robbing travellers and putting them to death. חֲבִי, so written instead of חֲבֵה (Ewald, § 16, *b*), is an irregularly formed infinitive for חֲבֹת (Ewald, § 238, *e*). *Ish gdūdīm*, a man of fighting-bands, i.e., in actual fact a highway robber, who lies in wait for travellers. The company (*chebher*, gang) of the priests resembled such a man. They murder on the way (*derekh*, an adverbial accusative) to Sichem. *Sichem*, a place on Mount Ephraim, between Ebal and Gerizim, the present Nablus (see at Josh. 17:7), was set apart as a city of refuge and a Levitical city (Josh. 20:7; 21:21); from which the more recent commentators have inferred that priests from Sichem, using the privileges of their city to cover crimes of their own, committed acts of murder, either upon fugitives who were hurrying thither, and whom they put to death at the command of the leading men who were ill-disposed towards them (Ewald), or upon other travellers, either from avarice or simple cruelty. But, apart from the fact that the Levitical cities are here confounded with the priests' cities (for Sichem was only a Levitical city, and not a priests' city at all), this conclusion is founded

upon the erroneous assumption, that the priests who were taken by Jeroboam from the people generally, had special places of abode assigned them, such as the law had assigned for the Levitical priests. The way to Sichem is mentioned as a place of murders and bloody deeds, because the road from Samaria the capital, and in fact from the northern part of the kingdom generally, to Bethel the principal place of worship belonging to the kingdom of the ten tribes, lay through this city. Pilgrims to the feasts for the most part took this road; and the priests, who were taken from the dregs of the people, appear to have lain in wait for them, either to rob, or, in case of resistance, to murder. The following כִּי carries it still higher, and adds another crime to the murderous deeds. *Zimmâh* most probably refers to an unnatural crime, as in Lev. 18:17; 19:29.

Thus does Israel heap up abomination upon abomination. V. 10. *"In the house of Israel I saw a horrible thing: there Ephraim practises whoredom: Israel has defiled itself."* The house of Israel is the kingdom of the ten tribes. שְׁעָרֵיהֶּ, a horrible thing, signifies abominations and crimes of every kind. In the second hemistich, *znûth*, i.e., spiritual and literal whoredom, is singled out as the principal sin. *Ephraim* is not the name of a tribe here, as Simson supposes, but is synonymous with the parallel *Israel*.

**Hosea 6:11.** In conclusion, Judah is mentioned again, that it may not regard itself as better or less culpable. V. 11. *"Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for thee, when I turn the imprisonment of my people."* Judah stands at the head as an absolute noun, and is then defined by the following לְךָ. The subject to *shâth* cannot be either Israel or Jehovah. The first, which Hitzig adopts, "Israel has prepared a harvest for thee," does not supply a thought at all in harmony with the connection; and the second is precluded by the fact that Jehovah Himself is the speaker. *Shâth* is used here in a passive sense, as in Job 38:11 (cf. Ges. § 137, 3\*). קָצִיר, harvest, is a figurative term for the judgment, as in Joel 4:13, Jer. 51:33. As Judah has sinned as

well as Israel, it cannot escape the punishment (cf. Hosea 5:5, 14). שׁוֹבָ שׁוֹבָ never means to bring back the captives; but in every passage in which it occurs it simply means to turn the captivity, and that in the figurative sense of *restitutio in integrum* (see at Deut. 30:3). 'Ammī, my people, i.e., the people of Jehovah, is not Israel of the ten tribes, but the covenant nation as a whole. Consequently *shbhūth 'ammī* is the misery into which Israel (of the twelve tribes) had been brought, through its falling away from God, not the Assyrian or Babylonian exile, but the misery brought about by the sins of the people. God could only avert this by means of judgments, through which the ungodly were destroyed and the penitent converted. Consequently the following is the thought which we obtain from the verse: "When God shall come to punish, that He may root out ungodliness, and bring back His people to their true destination, Judah will also be visited with the judgment." We must not only reject the explanation adopted by Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Umbreit, "when Israel shall have received its chastisement, and be once more received and restored by the gracious God, the richly merited punishment shall come upon Judah also," but that of Schmieder as well, who understands by the "harvest" a harvest of joy. They are both founded upon the false interpretation of *shūbh shbhūth*, as signifying the bringing back of the captives; and in the first there is the arbitrary limitation of 'ammī to the ten tribes. Our verse says nothing as to the question when and how God will turn the captivity of the people and punish Judah; this must be determined from other passages, which announce the driving into exile of both Israel and Judah, and the eventual restoration of those who are converted to the Lord their God. The complete turning of the captivity of the covenant nation will not take place till Israel as a nation shall be converted to Christ its Saviour.

### Hosea 7

**Hosea 7:1-3.** In the first strophe (vv. 1-7) the exposure of the moral depravity of Israel is

continued. V. 1. "When I heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim, reveals itself, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they practise deceit; and the thief cometh, the troop of robbers plundereth without. V. 2. And they say not in their heart, I should remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds have surrounded them, they have occurred before my face. V. 3. They delight the king with their wickedness, and princes with their lies." As the dangerous nature of a wound is often first brought out by the attempt to heal it, so was the corruption of Israel only brought truly to light by the effort to stem it. The first hemistich of v. 1 is not to be referred to the future, nor is the healing to be understood as signifying punishment, as Hitzig supposes; but the allusion is to the attempts made by God to put a stop to the corruption, partly by the preaching of repentance and the reproofs of the prophets, and partly by chastisements designed to promote reformation. The words contain no threatening of punishment, but a picture of the moral corruption that had become incurable. Here again Ephraim is not the particular tribe, but is synonymous with Israel, the people or kingdom of the ten tribes; and Samaria is especially mentioned in connection with it, as the capital and principal seat of the corruption of morals, just as Judah and Jerusalem are frequently classed together by the prophets. The lamentation concerning the incurability of the kingdom is followed by an explanatory notice of the sins and crimes that are openly committed. *Sheqer*, lying, i.e., deception both in word and deed towards God and man, theft and highway robbery and not fear of the vengeance of God. "*Accedit ad haec facinora securitas eorum ineffabilis*" (Marck). They do not consider that God will remember their evil deeds, and punish them; they are surrounded by them on all sides, and perform them without shame or fear before the face of God Himself. These sins delight both king and prince. To such a depth have even the rulers of the nation, who ought to practise justice and righteousness, fallen, that they not only fail to punish the sins, but take pleasure in their being committed.

**Hosea 7:4–7.** To this there is added the passion with which the people make themselves slave to idolatry, and their rulers give themselves up to debauchery (vv. 4–7). V. 4. “*They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker, who leaves off stirring from the kneading of the dough until its leavening.*” V. 5. “*In the day of our king the princes are made sick with the heat of wine: he has stretched out his hand with the scorers.*” V. 6. “*For they have brought their heart into their ambush, as into the oven; the whole night their baker sleeps; in the morning it burns like flaming fire.*” V. 7. “*They are all red-hot like the oven, and consume their judges: all their kings have fallen; none among them calls to me.*” “All” (*kullâm*: v. 4) does not refer to the king and princes, but to the whole nation. נָאֵר is spiritual adultery, apostasy from the Lord; and literal adultery is only so far to be thought of, that the worship of Baal promoted licentiousness. In this passionate career the nation resembles a furnace which a baker heats in the evening, and leaves burning all night while the dough is leavening, and then causes to turn with a still brighter flame in the morning, when the dough is ready for baking. בָּעֵרָה מֵאֵפָה, burning from the baker, i.e., heated by the baker. בָּעֵרָה is accentuated as *milel*, either because the Masoretes took offence at תַּנּוּר being construed as a feminine (Ges. *Lehrgeb.* p. 546; Ewald, *Gramm.* p. 449, note 1), or because *tiphchah* could not occupy any other place in the short space between *zakeph* and *athnach* (Hitzig). הָעֵיר, *excitare*, here in the sense of stirring. On the use of the participle in the place of the infinitive, with verbs of beginning and ending, see Ewald, § 298, b.

**Hosea 7:5–7.** Both king and princes are addicted to debauchery (v. 5). “The day of our king” is either the king’s birthday, or the day when he ascended the throne, on either of which he probably gave a feast to his nobles. יוֹם is taken most simply as an adverbial *accus. loci*. On this particular day the princes drink to such an extent, that they become ill with the heat of

the wine. הִחֲלִי, generally to make ill, here to make one’s self ill. Hitzig follows the ancient versions, in deriving it from חָלַל, and taking it as equivalent to הִחֲלִי, “they begin,” which gives a very insipid meaning. The difficult expression מִשָּׁדָּ יָדוֹ אֶת־לִי, “he draws his hand with the scoffers,” can hardly be understood in any other way than that suggested by Gesenius (*Lex.*), “the king goes about with scoffers,” i.e., makes himself familiar with them, so that we may compare שׂוֹת יָדוֹ עִם (Ex. 23:1). The scoffers are drunkards, just as in Prov. 20:1 wine is directly called a scoffer. In vv. 6, 7, the thought of the fourth verse is carried out still further. כִּי introduces the explanation and ground of the simile of the furnace; for v. 5 is subordinate to the main thought, and to be taken as a parenthetical remark. The words from כִּי קָרְבוּ to בָּאֶרְבָּם form one sentence. קָרַב is construed with *loci*, as in Judg. 19:13, Ps. 91:10: they have brought their heart near, brought them into their craftiness. “Like a furnace” (כְּתַנּוּר) contains an abridged simile. But it is not their *heart* itself which is here compared to a furnace (their heart = themselves), in the sense of “burning like a flaming furnace with base desires,” as Gesenius supposes; for the idea of bringing a furnace into an *’orebh* would be unsuitable and unintelligible. “The furnace is rather *’orbâm* (their ambush), that which they have in common, that which keeps them together; whilst the fuel is *libbâm*, their own disposition” (Hitzig). Their baker is the *machinator doli*, who kindles the fire in them, i.e., in actual fact, not some person or other who instigates a conspiracy, but the passion of idolatry. This sleeps through the night, i.e., it only rests till the opportunity and time have arrived for carrying out the evil thoughts of their heart, or until the evil thoughts of the heart have become ripe for execution. This time is described in harmony with the figure, as the morning, in which the furnace burns up into bright flames (הַיּוֹם points to the more remote

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*tannūr* as the subject). In v. 7 the figure is carried back to the literal fact. With the words, “they are all hot as a furnace,” the expression in v. 4, “adulterous like a furnace,” is resumed; and now the fruit of this conduct is mentioned, viz., “they devour their judges, cast down their kings.” By the judges we are not to understand the *sārīm* of v. 5, who are mentioned along with the king as the supreme guardians of the law; but the kings themselves are intended, as the administrators of justice, as in Hosea 13:10, where *shōphtīm* is also used as synonymous with מְלִכִּים, and embraces both king and princes. The clause, “all their kings are fallen,” adds no new feature to what precedes, and does not affirm that kings have also fallen in addition to or along with the judges; but it sums up what has been stated already, for the purpose of linking on the remark, that no one calls to the Lord concerning the fall of the kings. The suffix בָּהֶם does not refer to the fallen kings, but to the nation in its entirety, i.e., to those who have devoured their judges. The thought is this: in the passion with which all are inflamed for idolatry, and with which the princes revel with the kings, they give no such heed to the inevitable consequences of their ungodly conduct, as that any one reflects upon the fall of the kings, or perceives that Israel has forsaken the way which leads to salvation, and is plunging headlong into the abyss of destruction, so as to return to the Lord, who alone can help and save. The prophet has here the times after Jeroboam II in his mind, when Zechariah was overthrown by Shallum, Shallum by Menahem, and Menahem the son of Pekahiah by Pekah, and that in the most rapid succession (2 Kings 15:10, 14, 25), together with the eleven years’ anarchy between Zechariah and Shallum (see at 2 Kings 15:8–12). At the same time, the expression, “all their kings have fallen,” shows clearly, not only that the words are not to be limited to these events, but embrace all the earlier revolutions, but also and still more clearly, that there is no foundation whatever for the widespread historical interpretation of these verses, as

relating to a conspiracy against the then reigning king Zechariah, or Shallum, or Pakahiah, according to which the baker is either Menahem (Hitzig) or Pekah (Schmidt).

**Hosea 7:8–16.** In the next strophe (vv. 8–16) the prophecy passes from the internal corruption of the kingdom of the ten tribes to its worthless foreign policy, and the injurious attitude which it had assumed towards the heathen nations, and unfolds the disastrous consequences of such connections. V. 8. *“Ephraim, it mixes itself among the nations; Ephraim has become a cake not turned.* V. 9. *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; grey hair is also sprinkled upon him, and he knoweth it not.”* יִתְבּוֹלֵל, from בָּלַל, to mix or commingle, is not a future in the sense of “it will be dispersed among the Gentiles;” for, according to the context, the reference is not to the punishment of the dispersion of Israel among the nations, but to the state in which Israel then was. The Lord had separated Israel from the nations, that it might be holy to Him (Lev. 20:24, 26). As Balaam said of it, it was to be a people dwelling alone (Num. 23:9). But in opposition to this object of its divine calling, the ten tribes had mingled with the nations, i.e., with the heathen, learned their works, and served their idols (cf. Ps. 106:35, 36). The mingling with the nations consisted in the adoption of heathen ways, not in the penetration of the heathen into Israelitish possessions (Hitzig), nor merely in the alliances which it formed with heathen nations. For these were simply the consequence of inward apostasy from its God, of that inward mixing with the nature of heathenism which had already taken place. Israel had thereby become a cake not turned. עֲגָה, a cake baked upon hot ashes or red-hot stones, which, if it be not turned, is burned at the bottom, and not baked at all above. The meaning of this figure is explained by v. 9. As the fire will burn an ash-cake when it is left unturned, so have foreigners consumed the strength of Israel, partly by devastating wars, and partly by the heathenish nature which has penetrated into Israel in their

train. "Greyness is also sprinkled upon it;" i.e., the body politic, represented as one person, is already covered with traces of hoary old age, and is ripening for destruction. The object to אֲלֵךְ may easily be supplied from the previous clauses, namely, that strangers devour its strength, and it is growing old. The rendering *non sapit* is precluded by the emphatic וְהוּא, and he knoweth it not, i.e., does not perceive the decay of his strength.

**Hosea 7:10.** "And the pride of Israel beareth witness to his face, and they are not converted to Jehovah their God, and for all this they seek Him not." The first clause is repeated from Hosea 5:5. The testimony which the pride of Israel, i.e., Jehovah, bore to its face, consisted in the weakening and wasting away of the kingdom as described in v. 9. But with all this, they do not turn to the Lord who could save them, but seek help from their natural foes.

**Hosea 7:11.** "And Ephraim has become like a simple dove without understanding; they have called Egypt, they are gone to Asshur. V. 12. As they go, I spread my net over them; I bring them down like fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, according to the tidings to their assembly." The perfects in v. 1 describe the conduct of Israel as an accomplished fact, and this is represented by וְהוּא as the necessary consequence of its obstinate impenitence. The point of comparison between Israel and the simple dove, is not that the dove misses its proper dwelling and resting-place, and therefore goes fluttering about (Ewald); nor that, in trying to escape from the hawk, it flies into the net of the bird-catcher (Hitzig); but that when flying about in search of food, it does not observe the net that is spread for it (Rosenmüller). אֵיזֶן לֹב is to be taken as a predicate to *Ephraim* in spite of the accents, and not to *yōnâh phōthâh* (a simple dove), since *phōthâh* does not require either strengthening or explaining. Thus does Ephraim seek help from Egypt and Assyria. These words do not refer to the fact that there were two parties in the nation—an Assyrian and an Egyptian. Nor

do they mean that the whole nation applied at one time to Egypt to get rid of Asshur, and at another time to Asshur to escape from Egypt. "The situation is rather this: the people being sorely pressed by Asshur, at one time seek help from Egypt against Asshur; whilst at another they try to secure the friendship of the latter" (Hengstenberg, *Christology*, i. p. 164 transl.). For what threatened Israel was the burden of the "king of princes" (Hosea 8:10), i.e., the king of Asshur. And this they tried to avert partly by their coquettish arts (Hosea 8:9), and partly by appealing to the help of Egypt; and while doing so, they did not observe that they had fallen into the net of destruction, viz., the power of Assyria. In this net will the Lord entangle them as a punishment. As they go thither, God will spread His net over them like a bird-catcher, and bring them down to the earth like flying birds, i.e., bring them down from the open air, that is to say, from freedom, into the net of captivity, or exile. אֵי־סִירִים, a rare *hiphil* formation with *Yod mobile*, as in Prov. 4:25 (see Ewald, § 131, c). "According to the tidings (announcement) to their assembly:" i.e., in accordance with the threatening already contained in the law (Lev. 26:14ff.; Deut. 28:15ff.), and repeatedly uttered to the congregation by the prophets, of the judgments that should fall upon the rebellious, which threatening would now be fulfilled upon Ephraim.

**Hosea 7:13.** "Woe to them! for they have flown from me; devastation to them! for they have fallen away from me. I would redeem them, but they speak lies concerning me. V. 14. They did not cry to me in their heart, but howl upon their beds; they crowd together for corn and new wine, and depart against me." The Lord, thinking of the chastisement, exclaims, Woe to them, because they have fled from Him! *Nâdad*, which is applied to the flying of birds, points back to the figures employed in vv. 11, 12. *Shōd*, used as an exclamation, gives the literal explanation of 'ōi (woe). The imperfect 'ephdēm cannot be taken as referring to the redemption out of Egypt, because it does not stand for the



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preterite. It is rather voluntative or optative. "I would (should like to) redeem them (still); but they say I cannot and will not do it." These are the lies which they utter concerning Jehovah, partly with their mouths and partly by their actions, namely, in the fact that they do not seek help from Him, as is explained in v. 14. They cry to the Lord; yet it does not come from the heart, but (לֹא after בִּי) they howl (וַיִּלְלוּ, cf. Ges. § 70, 2, note) upon their beds, in unbelieving despair at the distress that has come upon them. What follows points to this. *Hithgōrēr*, to assemble, to crowd together (Ps. 56:7; 59:4; Isa. 54:15); here to gather in troops or crowd together for corn and new wine, because their only desire is to fill their belly. Thus they depart from God. The construction of סוּר with בָּ, instead of with מִן or מֵאֶחָרִי, is a pregnant one: to depart and turn against God.

**Hosea 7:15, 16.** Yet Jehovah has done still more for Israel. V. 15. "And I have instructed, have strengthened their arms, and they think evil against me. V. 16. They turn, but not upwards: they have become like a false bow. Their princes will fall by the sword, for the defiance of their tongue: this is their derision in the land of Egypt." יָסַר here is not to chastise, but to instruct, so that זְרוּעֵתָם (their arms) is to be taken as the object to both verbs. Instructing the arms, according to the analogy of Ps. 18:35, is equivalent to showing where and how strength is to be acquired. And the Lord has not contented Himself with merely instructing. He has also strengthened their arms, and given them power to fight, and victory over their foes (cf. 2 Kings 14:25, 26). And yet they think evil of Him; not by speaking lies (v. 13), but by falling away from Him, by their idolatrous calf-worship, by which they rob the Lord of the glory due to Him alone, practically denying His true divinity. This attitude towards the Lord is summed up in two allegorical sentences in v. 16, and the ruin of their princes is foretold. They turn, or turn round, but not upwards (עָלָה, an adverb, or a substantive signifying height, as in Hosea 11:7, 2 Sam. 23:1, not "the Most High,"

i.e., God, although turning upwards is actually turning to God). From the fact that with all their turning about they do not turn upwards, they have become like a treacherous bow, the string of which has lost its elasticity, so that the arrows do not hit the mark (cf. Ps. 78:57). And thus Israel also fails to reach its destination. Therefore its princes shall fall. The *princes* are mentioned as the originators of the enmity against God, and all the misery into which they have plunged the people and kingdom. זַעַם, fury, here defiance or rage. Defiance of tongue the princes showed in the lies which they uttered concerning Jehovah (v. 13), and with which they blasphemed in a daring manner the omnipotence and faithfulness of the Lord. וַיִּשְׁטָן stands, according to a dialectical difference in the mode of pronunciation, for וַיִּשְׁתָּן, not for וַיִּשְׁתָּן (Ewald, § 183, a). This, namely their falling by the sword, will be for a derision to them in the land of Egypt: not because they will fall in Egypt, or perish by the sword of the Egyptians; but because they put their trust in Egypt, the derision of Egypt will come upon them when they are overthrown (cf. Isa. 30:3, 5).

## Hosea 8

### The Judgment Consequent Upon Apostasy—Ch. 8–9:9

**Hosea 8:1–9:9.** The coming judgment, viz., the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, is predicted in three strophes, containing a fresh enumeration of the sins of Israel (Hosea 8:1–7), a reference to the fall of the kingdom, which is already about to commence (vv. 8–14), and a warning against false security (Hosea 9:1–9).

**Hosea 8:1–7.** The prophecy rises with a vigorous swing, as in Hosea 5:8, to the prediction of judgment. V. 1. "The trumpet to thy mouth! Like an eagle upon the house of Jehovah! Because they transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. V. 2. To me will they cry: My God, we know Thee, we Israel!" The first sentence of v. 1 is an exclamation, and therefore has no verb. The summons issues from Jehovah, as the suffixes in the last sentences show, and is

addressed to the prophet, who is to blow the trumpet, as the herald of Jehovah, and give the people tidings of the approaching judgment (see at Hosea 5:8). The second sentence gives the alarming message to be delivered: like an eagle comes the foe, or the judgment upon the house of Jehovah. The simile of the eagle, that shoots down upon its prey with the rapidity of lightning, points back to the threat of Moses in Deut. 28:49. The *"house of Jehovah"* is neither the temple at Jerusalem (Jerome, Theod., Cyr.), the introduction of which here would be at variance with the context; nor the principal temple of Samaria, with the fall of which the whole kingdom would be ruined (Ewald, Sim.), since the temples erected for the calf-worship at Dan and Bethel are called *Bēth bāmōth*, not *Bēth Yhōvâh*; nor even the land of Jehovah, either here or at Hosea 9:15 (Hitzig), for a land is not a house; but Israel was the house of Jehovah, as being a portion of the congregation of the Lord, as in Hosea 9:15, Num. 12:7, Jer. 12:7, Zech. 9:8; cf. οἶκος Θεοῦ in Heb. 3:6 and 1 Tim. 3:15. The occasion of the judgment was the transgression of the covenant and law of the Lord, which is more particularly described in v. 4. In this distress they will call for help to Jehovah: "My God (i.e., each individual will utter this cry), we know Thee?" *Israel* is in apposition to the subject implied in the verb. They know Jehovah, so far as He has revealed Himself to the whole nation of Israel; and the name *Israel* is in itself a proof that they belong to the people of God.

**Hosea 8:3.** But this knowledge of God, regarded simply as a historical acquaintance with Him, cannot possibly bring salvation. V. 3. *"Israel dislikes good; let the enemy pursue it."* This is the answer that God will give to those who cry to Him. טוב denotes neither "Jehovah as the highest good" (Jerome) or as "the good One" (Sims.), nor "the good law of God" (Schmieder), but the good or salvation which Jehovah has guaranteed to the nation through His covenant of grace, and which He bestowed upon those who kept His covenant. Because *Israel* has despised this good, let the enemy pursue it.

**Hosea 8:4.** The proof of *Israel's* renunciation of its God is to be found in the facts mentioned in v. 4. *"They have set up kings, but not from me, have set up princes, and I know it not: their silver and their gold they have made into idols, that it may be cut off."* The setting up of kings and princes, not from Jehovah, and without His knowledge, i.e., without His having been asked, refers chiefly to the founding of the kingdom by Jeroboam I. It is not to be restricted to this, however, but includes at the same time the obstinate persistence of *Israel* in this ungodly attitude on all future occasions, when there was either a change or usurpation of the government. And the fact that not only did the prophet Ahijah foretell to Jeroboam I that he would rule over the ten tribes (1 Kings 11:30ff.), but Jehu was anointed king over *Israel* by Elisha's command (2 Kings 9), and therefore both of them received the kingdom by the express will of Jehovah, is not at variance with this, so as to require the solution that we have a different view here from that which prevails in the books of Kings,—namely, one which sprang out of the repeated changes of government and anarchies in this kingdom (Simson). For neither the divine promise of the throne, nor the anointing performed by the command of God, warranted their forcibly seizing upon the government,—a crime of which both Jeroboam and Jehu rendered themselves guilty. The way in which both of them paved the way to the throne was not in accordance with the will of God, but was most ungodly (see at 1 Kings 11:40). Jeroboam was already planning a revolt against Solomon (1 Kings 11:27), and led the gathering of the ten tribes when they fell away from the house of David (1 Kings 12:2ff.). Of Jehu, again, it is expressly stated in 2 Kings 9:14, that he conspired against Joram. And the other usurpers, just like the two already named, opened the way to the throne by means of conspiracies, whilst the people not only rebelled against the rightful heir to the throne at Solomon's death, from pure dislike to the royal house of David, which had been appointed by God, and made Jeroboam king, but expressed their approval of all subsequent conspiracies as

soon as they have been successful. This did not come from Jehovah, but was a rebellion against Him—a transgression of His covenant. To this must be added the further sin, viz., the setting up of the idolatrous calf-worship on the part of Jeroboam, to which all the kings of Israel adhered. It was in connection with this, that the application of the silver and gold to idols, by which Israel completely renounced the law of Jehovah, had taken place. It is true that silver was not used in the construction of the golden calves; but it was employed in the maintenance of their worship. לְמַעַן יִכָּרֵת: that it (the gold and silver) may be destroyed, as more fully stated in v. 6. לְמַעַן describes the consequence of this conduct, which, though not designed, was nevertheless inevitable, as if it had been distinctly intended.

**Hosea 8:5.** *“Thy calf disgusts, O Samaria; my wrath is kindled against them: how long are they incapable of purity. V. 6. For this also is from Israel: a workman made it, and it is not God; but the calf of Samaria will become splinters.”* *Zânach* (disgusts) points back to v. 3. As Israel felt disgust at what was good, so did Jehovah at the golden calf of Samaria. It is true that *zânach* is used here intransitively in the sense of smelling badly, or being loathsome; but this does not alter the meaning, which is obvious enough from the context, namely, that it is Jehovah whom the calf disgusts. The calf of Samaria is not a golden calf set up in the city of Samaria; as there is no allusion in history to any such calf as this. Samaria is simply mentioned in the place of the kingdom, and the calf is the one that was set up at Bethel, the most celebrated place of worship in the kingdom, which is also the only one mentioned in Hosea 10:5, 15. On account of this calf the wrath of Jehovah is kindled against the Israelites, who worship this calf, and cannot desist. This is the thought of the question expressing disgust at these abominations. How long are they incapable of נִקְיָה, i.e., purity of walk before the Lord, instead of the abominations of idolatry (cf. Jer. 19:4); not “freedom from punishment,”

as Hitzig supposes. To לֹא יוּכָלוּ, “they are unable,” we may easily supply “to bear,” as in Isa. 1:14 and Ps. 101:5. “For” (*kī*, v. 6) follows as an explanation of the main clause in v. 5, “Thy calf disgusts.” The calf of Samaria is an abomination to the Lord, for it is also out of Israel (Israel’s God out of Israel itself!); a workman made it,—what folly! הוּא הוּא is a predicate, brought out with greater emphasis by ו, *et quidem*, in the sense of *iste*. Therefore will it be destroyed like the golden calf at Sinai, which was burnt and ground to powder (Ex. 32:20; Deut. 9:21). The ἄπ. λεγ. שֻׁבְרֵי־בָּרִים, from Arab. *sabb*, to cut, signifies ruins or splinters.

**Hosea 8:7.** This will Israel reap from its ungodly conduct. V. 7. *“For they sow wind, and reap tempest: it has no stalks; shoot brings no fruit; and even if it brought it, foreigners would devour it.”* With this figure, which is so frequently and so variously used (cf. Hosea 10:13; 12:2; Job 4:8; Prov. 22:8), the threat is accounted for by a general thought taken from life. The harvest answers to the sowing (cf. Gal. 6:7, 8). Out of the wind comes tempest. *Wind* is a figurative representation of human exertions; the *tempest*, of destruction. Instead of *rūäch* we have אֲנָן, עֲמָל, עוֹלָה (nothingness, weariness, wickedness) in Hosea 10:13, Job 4:8, and Prov. 22:8. In the second hemistich the figure is carried out still further. קָמָה, “seed standing upon the stalk,” is not to *it* (viz., that which has been sowed). *Tsemach* brings no *qemach*,—a play upon the words, answering to our shoot and fruit. *Qemach*: generally meal, here probably the grain-bearing ear, from which the meal is obtained. But even if the shoot, when grown, should yield some meal, strangers, i.e., foreigners, would consume it. In these words not only are the people threatened with failure of the crop; but the failure and worthlessness of all that they do are here predicted. Not only the corn of Israel, but Israel itself, will be swallowed up.

**Hosea 8:8.** With this thought the still further threatening of judgment in the next strophe is

introduced. V. 8. *“Israel is swallowed up; now are they among the nations like a vessel, with which there is no satisfaction.”* The advance in the threat of punishment lies less in the extension of the thought, that not only the fruit of the field, but the whole nation, will be swallowed up by foes, than in the perfect נִבְלַע, which indicates that the time of the ripening of the evil seeds has already begun (Jerome, Simson). עַתָּה הֵיוּ, now already have they become among the nations like a despised vessel, which men cast away as useless (cf. Jer. 22:28; 48:38). This lot have they prepared for themselves.

**Hosea 8:9.** *“For they went up to Asshur; wild ass goes alone by itself; Ephraim sued for loves. V. 10. Yea, though they sue among the nations, now will I gather them, and they will begin to diminish on account of the burden of the king of the princes.”* Going to Assyria is defined still further in the third clause as suing for loves, i.e., for the favour and help of the Assyrians. The folly of this suing is shown in the clause, “wild ass goes by itself alone,” the meaning and object of which have been quite mistaken by those who supply a *simil.* For neither by connecting it with the preceding words thus, “Israel went to Asshur, like a stubborn ass going by itself” (Ewald), nor by attaching to it those which follow, “like a wild ass going alone, Ephraim sued for loves,” do we get any suitable point of comparison. The thought is rather this: whilst even a wild ass, that stupid animal, keeps by itself to maintain its independence, Ephraim tries to form unnatural alliances with the nations of the world, that is to say, alliances that are quite incompatible with its vocation. *Hithnâh*, from *tânâh*, probably a denom. of *’ethnâh* (see at Hosea 2:14), to give the reward of prostitution, here in the sense of bargaining for *amours*, or endeavouring to secure them by presents. The *kal yithnû* has the same meaning in v. 10. The word אֶקְבֹּצֵם, to which different renderings have been given, can only have a threatening or punitive sense here; and the suffix cannot refer to בְּגוֹיִם, but only to the

subject contained in *yithnu*, viz., the Ephraimites. The Lord will bring them together, sc. among the nations, i.e., bring them all thither. קָבַץ is used in a similar sense in Hosea 9:6. The more precise definition is added in the next clause, in the difficult expression וַיִּחְלוּ מֵעַט, in which וַיִּחְלוּ may be taken most safely in the sense of “beginning,” as in Judg. 20:31, 2 Chron. 29:17, and Ezek. 9:6, in all of which this form occurs, and מעט as an *adject. verb.*, connected with החל like the adjective בְּהוֹת in 1 Sam. 3:2: “They begin to be, or become, less (i.e., fewer), on account of the burden of the king of princes,” i.e., under the oppression which they will suffer from the king of Assyria, not by war taxes or deportation, but when carried away into exile. מִלְּךְ מַלְכִים = מִלְּךְ שָׂרִים is a term applied to the great Assyrian king, who boasted, according to Isa. 10:8, that his princes were all kings.

**Hosea 8:11, 12.** This threat is accounted for in vv. 11ff., by an allusion to the sins of Israel. V. 11. *“For Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, the altars have become to him for sinning. V. 12. I wrote to him the fulnesses of my law; they were counted as a strange thing.”* Israel was to have only one altar, and that in the place where the Lord would reveal His name (Deut. 12:5ff.). But instead of that, Ephraim had built a number of altars in different places, to multiply the sin of idolatry, and thereby heap more and more guilt upon itself. לָחַטָּא is used, in the first clause, for the act of sin; and in the second, for the consequences of that act. And this was not done from ignorance of the divine will, but from neglect of the divine commandments. אֶקְבֹּצֵם is a historical present, indicating that what had occurred was continuing still. These words refer unquestionably to the great number of the laws written in the Mosaic *thorah*. רְבוּ, according to the *chethib* רְבוּ, with ת dropped, equivalent to רַבְבָּה, as in 1 Chron. 29:7, ten thousand, myriads. The Masoretes, who supposed the number to be used in an arithmetical sense,

altered it, as conjecturally unsuitable, into רַבֵּי, multitudes, although רַב does not occur anywhere else in the plural. The expression “the myriads of my law” is hyperbolic, to indicate the almost innumerable multitude of the different commandments contained in the law. It was also in a misapprehension of the nature of the hyperbole that the supposition originated, that אֲבָתוֹב was a hypothetical future (Jerome). כְּמוֹ זָר, like something foreign, which does not concern them at all.

**Hosea 8:13.** “Slain-offerings for gifts they sacrifice; flesh, and eat: Jehovah has no pleasure in them: now will He remember their transgression, and visit their sins: they will return to Egypt. V. 14. And Israel forgot its Creator, and built palaces: and Judah multiplied fortified cities: and I shall send fire into its cities, and it will devour its castles.” With the multiplication of the altars they increased the number of the sacrifices. הַבְּהֵבִי is a noun in the plural with the suffix, and is formed from יהב by reduplication. The slain-offerings of my sacrificial gifts, equivalent to the gifts of slain-offerings presented to me continually, they sacrifice as flesh, and eat it; that is to say, they are nothing more than flesh, which they slay and eat, and not sacrifices in which Jehovah takes delight, or which could expiate their sins. Therefore the Lord will punish their sins; they will return to Egypt, i.e., be driven away into the land of bondage, out of which God once redeemed His people. These words are simply a special application of the threat, held out by Moses in Deut. 28:68, to the degenerate ten tribes. Egypt is merely a type of the land of bondage, as in Hosea 9:3, 6. In v. 14 the sin of Israel is traced back to its root. This is forgetfulness of God, and deification of their own power, and manifests itself in the erection of הַיְקִלֹת, palaces, not idolatrous temples. Judah also makes itself partaker of this sin, by multiplying the fortified cities, and placing its confidence in fortifications. These castles of false security the Lord will destroy. The

*’armânōth* answer to the *hēkhâloth*. The suffixes attached to בְּעַרְיֵי and אֲרַמְנֹתֶיהָ refer to both kingdoms: the masculine suffix to Israel and Judah, as a people; the feminine to the two as a land, as in Lam. 2:5.

## Hosea 9

**Hosea 9:1-9.** Warning against false security. The earthly prosperity of the people and kingdom was no security against destruction. Because Israel had fallen away from its God, it should not enjoy the blessing of its field-produce, but should be carried away to Assyria, where it would be unable to keep any joyful feasts at all. V. 1. “Rejoice not, O Israel, to exult like the nations: for thou hast committed whoredom against thy God: hast loved the wages of whoredom upon all corn-floors. V. 2. The threshing-floor and press will not feed them, and the new wine will deceive it.” The rejoicing to which Israel was not to give itself up was, according to v. 2, rejoicing at a plentiful harvest. All nations rejoiced, and still rejoice, at this (cf. Isa. 9:2), because they regard the blessing of harvest as a sign and pledge of the favour and grace of God, which summon them to gratitude towards the giver. Now, when the heathen nations ascribed their fights to their gods, and in their way thanked them for them, they did this in the ignorance of their heart, without being specially guilty on that account, since they lived in the world without the light of divine revelation. But when Israel rejoiced in a heathenish way at the blessing of its harvest, and attributed this blessing to the Baals (see Hosea 2:7), the Lord could not leave this denial of His gracious benefits unpunished. אֶל-גִּיל belongs to תִּשְׂמַח, heightening the idea of joy, as in Job 3:22. כִּי זָנִיתָ does not give the object of the joy (“that thou hast committed whoredom:” Ewald and others), but the reason why Israel was not to rejoice over its harvests, namely, because it had become unfaithful to its God, and had fallen into idolatry. זָנָה מֵעַל, to commit whoredom out beyond God (by going away from Him). The words, “thou lovest the wages

of whoredom upon all corn-floors," are to be understood, according to Hosea 2:7, 14, as signifying that Israel would not regard the harvest-blessing upon its corn-floors as gifts of the goodness of its God, but as presents from the Baals, for which it had to serve them with still greater zeal. There is no ground for thinking of any peculiar form of idolatry connected with the corn-floors. Because of this the Lord would take away from them the produce of the floor and press, namely, according to v. 3, by banishing the people out of the land. Floor and press will not feed them, i.e., will not nourish or satisfy them. The floor and press are mentioned in the place of their contents, or what they yield, viz., for corn and oil, as in 2 Kings 6:27. By the press we must understand the oil-presses (cf. Joel 2:24), because the new wine is afterwards specially mentioned, and corn, new wine, and oil are connected together in Hosea 2:10, 24. The suffix **הָאָרָץ** refers to the people regarded as a community.

**Hosea 9:3.** *"They will not remain in the land of Jehovah: Ephraim returns to Egypt, and they will eat unclean things in the land of Asshur. V. 4. They will not pour out wine to Jehovah, and their slain-offerings will not please Him: like bread of mourning are they to Him; all who eat it become unclean: for their bread is for themselves, it does not come into the house of Jehovah."* Because they have fallen away from Jehovah, He will drive them out of His land. The driving away is described as a return to Egypt, as in Hosea 8:13; but Asshur is mentioned immediately afterwards as the actual land of banishment. That this threat is not to be understood as implying that they will be carried away to Egypt as well as to Assyria, but that Egypt is referred to here and in v. 6, just as in Hosea 8:13, simply as a type of the land of captivity, so that Assyria is represented as a new Egypt, may be clearly seen from the words themselves, in which eating unclean bread in Assyria is mentioned as the direct consequence of their return to Egypt; whereas neither here nor in v. 6 is their being carried away to Assyria mentioned at all; but,

on the contrary, in v. 6, *Egypt* only is introduced as the place where they are to find their grave. This is still more evident from the fact that Hosea throughout speaks of Asshur alone, as the rod of the wrath of God for His rebellious people. The king of Asshur is king *Jareb* (striver), to whom Ephraim goes for help, and by whom it will be put to shame (Hosea 5:13; 10:6); and it is from the Assyrian king *Salman* that devastation and destruction proceed (Hosea 10:14). And, lastly, it is expressly stated in Hosea 11:5, that Israel will not return to Egypt, but to Asshur, who will be its king. By the allusion to Egypt, therefore, the carrying away to Assyria is simply represented as a state of bondage and oppression, resembling the sojourn of Israel in Egypt in the olden time, or else the threat contained in Deut. 28:68 is simply transferred to Ephraim. They will eat unclean things in Assyria, not only inasmuch as when, under the oppression of their heathen rulers, they will not be able to observe the laws of food laid down in the law, or will be obliged to eat unclean things from simple want and misery; but also inasmuch as all food, which was not sanctified to the Lord by the presentation of the first-fruits, was unclean food to Israel (Hengstenberg). In Assyria these offerings would cease with the whole of the sacrificial ritual; and the food which was clean in itself would thereby become unclean outside the land of Jehovah (cf. Ezek. 4:13). This explanation of **אֲכָלִים טְמֵאִים** is required by v. 4, in which a further reason is assigned for the threat. For what we have there is not a description of the present attitude of Israel towards Jehovah, but a picture of the miserable condition of the people in exile. The verbs are pure futures. In Assyria they will neither be able to offer wine to the Lord as a drink-offering, nor such slain-offerings as we well-pleasing to Him. For Israel could only offer sacrifices to its God at the place where He made known His name by revelation, and therefore not in exile, where He had withdrawn His gracious presence from it. The drink-offerings are mentioned, as *pars pro toto*, in the place of all the meat-offerings and drink-offerings, i.e., of the bloodless gifts, which were

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connected with the *zbhâchîm*, or burnt-offerings and thank-offerings (*shlâmîm*, Num. 15:2–15, 28, 29), and could never be omitted when the first-fruits were offered (Lev. 23:13, 18). “Their sacrifices:” *zibhchêhem* belongs to יַעֲרְבוּ-לוֹ (shall be pleasing to Him), notwithstanding the previous *segholta*, because otherwise the subject to יַעֲרְבוּ would be wanting, and there is evidently quite as little ground for supplying נִסְכֵיהֶם from the preceding clause, as Hitzig proposes, as for assuming that עָרַב here means to mix. Again, we must not infer from the words, “their slain-offerings will not please Him,” that the Israelites offered sacrifices when in exile. The meaning is simply that the sacrifices, which they might wish to offer to Jehovah there, would not be well-pleasing to Him. We must not repeat זְבַחיהֶם as the subject to the next clause לָהֶם ... בְּלֶחֶם, in the sense of “their sacrifices will be to them like mourners’ bread,” which would give no suitable meaning; for though the sacrifices are called bread of God, they are never called the bread of men. The subject may be supplied very readily from *klechem* (like bread) thus: their bread, or food, would be to them like mourners’ bread; and the correctness of this is proved by the explanatory clause, “for their bread,” etc. *Lechem ’ônîm*, bread of affliction, i.e., of those who mourn for the dead (cf. Deut. 26:14), in other words, the bread eaten at funeral meals. This was regarded as unclean, because the corpse defiled the house, and all who came in contact with it, for seven days (Num. 19:14). Their bread would resemble bread of this kind, because it had not been sanctified by the offering of the first-fruits. “For their bread will not come into the house of Jehovah,” viz., to be sanctified, “for their souls,” i.e., to serve for the preservation of their life.

**Hosea 9:5, 6.** Their misery will be felt still more keenly on the feast-days. V. 5. “What will ye do on the day of the festival, and on the day of the feast of Jehovah? V. 6. For behold they have gone away because of the desolation: Egypt will gather them together, Memphis bury them: their

*valuables in silver, thistles will receive them; thorns in their tents.*” As the temple and ritual will both be wanting in their exile, they will be unable to observe any of the feasts of the Lord. No such difference can be shown to exist between *yôm mō’ēd* and *yôm chag Yhōvâh*, as would permit of our referring *mō’ēd* to feasts of a different kind from *chag*. In Lev. 23, all the feasts recurring at a fixed period, on which holy meetings were held, including the Sabbath, are called מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה; and even though the three feasts at which Israel was to appear before the Lord, viz., the passover, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles, are described as *chaggîm* in Ex. 34:18ff., every other joyous festival is also called a *chag* (Ex. 32:5; Judg. 21:19). It is therefore just as arbitrary on the part of Grotius and Rosenmüller to understand by *mō’ēd* the three yearly pilgrim-festivals, and by *chag Yhōvâh* all the rest of the feasts, including the new moon, as it is on the part of Simson to restrict the last expression to the great harvest-feast, i.e., the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:39, 41). The two words are synonymous, but they are so arranged that by *chag* the idea of joy is brought into greater prominence, and the feast-day is thereby designated as a day of holy joy before Jehovah; whereas *mō’ēd* simply expresses the idea of a feast established by the Lord, and sanctified to Him (see at Lev. 23:2). By the addition of the *chag Yhōvâh*, therefore, greater emphasis is given to the thought, viz., that along with the feasts themselves all festal joy will also vanish. The perfect הִלְכוּ (v. 6) may be explained from the fact, that the prophet saw in spirit the people already banished from the land of the Lord. הִלְךְ, to go away out of the land. Egypt is mentioned as the place of banishment, in the same sense as in v. 3. There will they all find their graves. קָבַר in combination with קָבְרָה is the gathering together of the dead for a common burial, like אָסַף in Ezek. 29:5, Jer. 8:2; 25:33. מָן, or מָנָה, as in Isa. 19:13, Jer. 2:16; 44:1, Ezek. 30:13, 16, probably contracted from מָנָה, answers rather to the Coptic *Membe*, *Memphe*, than to the old Egyptian *Men-nefr*, i.e., *mansio*

*bona*, the profane name of the city of *Memphis*, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt, the ruins of which are to be seen on the western bank of the Nile, to the south of Old Cairo. The sacred name of this city was *Ha-ka-ptah*, i.e., house of the worship of Phtah (see Brugsch, *Geogr. Inschriften*, i. pp. 234–5). In their own land thorns and thistles would take the place of silver valuables. The suffix attached to יִרְשָׁם refers, *ad sensum*, to the collective מַחְמַד לְכֶסֶפִּים, the valuables in silver. These are not “silver idols,” as Hitzig imagines, but houses ornamented and filled with the precious metal, as בְּאֶהְלֵיהֶם in the parallel clause clearly shows. The growth of thorns and thistles presupposes the utter desolation of the abodes of men (Isa. 34:13).

**Hosea 9:7.** “The days of visitation are come, the days of retribution are come; Israel will learn: a fool the prophet, a madman the man of spirit, for the greatness of thy guilt, and the great enmity. V. 8. A spy is Ephraim with my God: the prophet a snare of the bird-catcher in all his ways, enmity in the house of his God. V. 9. They have acted most corruptly, as in the days of Gibeah: He remembers their iniquity, visits their sins.” The perfects in v. 7 are prophetic. The time of visitation and retribution is approaching. Then will Israel learn that its prophets, who only predicted prosperity and good (Ezek. 13:10), were infatuated fools. אָוִיל וגו' introduces, without *kī*, what Israel will experience, as in Hosea 7:2, Amos 5:12. It does not follow, from the use of the expression *ʾish rūāch*, that the reference is to true prophets. *ʾish rūāch* (a man of spirit) is synonymous with the *ʾish hōlēkh rūāch* (a man walking in the spirit) mentioned in Mic. 2:11 as prophesying lies, and may be explained from the fact, that even the false prophets stood under the influence of a superior demoniacal power, and were inspired by a *rūāch sheqer* (“a lying spirit,” 1 Kings 22:22). The words which follow, viz., “a fool is the prophet,” etc., which cannot possibly mean, that men have treated, despised, and persecuted the prophets as fools and madmen,

are a decisive proof that the expression does not refer to true prophets. עַל רַב עֲוֹנוֹהֶם is attached to the principal clauses, בְּאֵן ... הַשְּׁלָם. The punishment and retribution occur because of the greatness of the guilt of Israel. In וְרָבָה the preposition עַל continues in force, but as a conjunction: “and because the enmity is great” (cf. Ewald, § 351, *a*). *Mastēmāh*, enmity, not merely against their fellow-men generally, but principally against God and His servants the true prophets. This is sustained by facts in v. 8. The first clause, which is a difficult one and has been interpreted in very different ways, “spying is Ephraim אֶל־הֵי עִם” (with or by my God), cannot contain the thought that Ephraim, the tribe, is, according to its true vocation, a watchman for the rest of the people, whose duty it is to stand with the Lord upon the watch-tower and warn Israel when the Lord threatens punishment and judgment (Jerome, Schmidt); for the idea of a prophet standing with Jehovah upon a watch-tower is not only quite foreign to the Old Testament, but irreconcilable with the relation in which the prophets stood to Jehovah. The Lord did indeed appoint prophets as watchmen to His people (Ezek. 3:17); but He does take His own stand upon the watch-tower with them. *Tsâphâh* in this connection, where prophets are spoken of both before and after, can only denote the eager watching on the part of the prophets for divine revelations, as in Hab. 2:1, and not their looking out for help; and אֶל־הֵי עִם cannot express their fellowship or agreement with God, if only on account of the suffix “my God,” in which Hosea contrasts the true God as His own, with the God of the people. The thought indicated would require אֶל־הֵי, a reading which is indeed met with in some codices, but is only a worthless conjecture. עִם denotes outward fellowship here: “with” = by the side of. Israel looks out for prophecies or divine revelations with the God of the prophet, i.e., at the side of Jehovah; in other words, it does not follow or trust its own prophets, who are not inspired by Jehovah.



These are like snares of a bird-catcher in its road, i.e., they cast the people headlong into destruction. נְבִיא stands at the head, both collectively and absolutely. In all its ways there is the trap of the bird-catcher: i.e., all its projects and all that it does will only tend to ensnare the people. Hostility to Jehovah and His servants the true prophets, is in the house of the God of the Israelites, i.e., in the temple erected for the calf-worship; a fact of which Amos (Amos 7:10–17) furnishes a practical example. Israel has thereby fallen as deeply into abomination and sins as in the days of Gibeah, i.e., as at the time when the abominable conduct of the men of Gibeah in connection with the concubine of a Levite took place, as related in Judg. 19ff., in consequence of which the tribe of Benjamin was almost exterminated. The same depravity on the part of Israel will be equally punished by the Lord now (cf. Hosea 8:13).

***The Degeneracy of Israel, and Ruin of Its Kingdom***—Ch. 9:10–11:11

**Hosea 9:10–11:11.** In this section the arrangement of the contents in strophes becomes very apparent. Three times (viz., Hosea 9:10; 10:1, and 11:1) does the prophet revert to the early days of Israel, and show how Israel has been unfaithful to its divine calling, and from time immemorial has responded to all the manifestations of the love and grace of God by apostasy and idolatry, so that the Lord is obliged to punish the degenerate and obstinate nation with banishment into exile and the destruction of the kingdom. Nevertheless, as the Holy One, and for the sake of His own unchangeable covenant faithfulness, He will not utterly eradicate it.

**Hosea 9:10–17.** V. 10. *“I found Israel like grapes in the desert, I saw your fathers like early fruit on the fig-tree in the first shooting; but they came to Baal-Peor, and consecrated themselves to shame, and became abominations like their lover.”*

Grapes in the desert and early figs are pleasant choice fruits to whoever finds them. This figure therefore indicates the peculiar pleasure which

Jehovah found in the people of Israel when He led them out of Egypt, or the great worth which they had in His eyes when He chose them for the people of His possession, and concluded a covenant with them at Sinai (Theod., Cyr.). *Bammidbâr* (in the desert) belongs, so far as its position is concerned, to *’ânâbhîm*: grapes in the dry, barren desert, where you do not expect to find such refreshing fruit; but, so far as the fact is concerned, it also refers to the place in which Israel was thus found by God, since you can only find fruit in the desert when you are there yourself. The words, moreover, evidently refer to Deut. 32:10 (“I found him [Israel] in the wilderness,” etc.), and point *implicite* to the helpless condition in which Israel was when God first adopted it. The suffix to *brê’shîthâh* (at *her* beginning) refers to תְּאֵנָה, the first-fruit, which the fig-tree bears in its first time, at the first shooting. But Israel no longer answered to the good pleasure of God. They came to Baal-Peor. בַּעַל-פְּעוֹר without the preposition אֶל is not the idol of that name, but the place where it was worshipped, which was properly called *Beth-Peor* or *Peor* (see at Num. 23:28 and 25:3). יְצִדְדִי is chosen instead of יְצַמֵּד (Num. 23:3, 5), to show that Israel ought to have consecrated itself to Jehovah, to have been the *nazir* of Jehovah. *Bōsheth* (shame) is the name given to the idol of Baal-Peor (cf. Jer. 3:24), the worship of which was a shame to Israel. *’Ohabh*, the paramour, is also Baal-Peor. Of all the different rebellions on the part of Israel against Jehovah, the prophet singles out only the idolatry with Baal-Peor, because the principal sin of the ten tribes was Baal-worship in its coarser or more refined forms.

**Hosea 9:11, 12.** It is very evident that this is what he has in his mind, and that he regards the apostasy of the ten tribes as merely a continuation of that particular idolatry, from the punishment which is announced in vv. 11, 12, as about to fall upon Ephraim in consequence. V. 11. *“Ephraim, its glory will fly away like a bird; no birth, and no pregnancy, and no conception.”* V. 12. *Yea, though they bring up*

their sons, I make them bereft, without a man; for woe to them when I depart from them!" The glory which God gave to His people through great multiplication, shall vanish away. The licentious worship of luxury will be punished by the diminution of the numbers of the people, by childlessness, and the destruction of the youth that may have grown up. מְלֵדָה, so that there shall be no bearing. בְּטֶן, the womb, for pregnancy or the fruit of the womb. Even (kī emphatic) if the sons (the children) grow up, God will make them bereft, מְאַדָּם, so that there shall be no men there. The grown-up sons shall be swept away by death, by the sword (cf. Deut. 32:25). The last clause gives the reason for the punishment threatened. גַּם adds force; it usually stands at the head of the sentence, and here belongs to לָהֶם: Yea, woe to them, if I depart from them, or withdraw my favour from them! שׁוּר stands for סוּר, according to the interchangeableness of ש and ס (Aquila and Vulg.). This view has more to support it than the supposition that שׁוּר is an error of the pen for שׁוּר (Ewald, Hitzig, etc.), since שׁוּר, to look, construed with מֵן, in the sense of to look away from a person, is never met with, although the meaning is just the same.

**Hosea 9:13-14.** The vanishing of the glory of Ephraim is carried out still further in what follows. V. 13. "Ephraim as I selected it for a Tyre planted in the valley; so shall Ephraim lead out its sons to the murderer. V. 14. Give them, O Jehovah: what shalt Thou give him? Give them a childless womb and dry breasts." In v. 13 Ephraim is the object to רָאִיתִי (I have seen), but on account of the emphasis it is placed first, as in v. 11; and רָאָה with an accusative and ל signifies to select anything for a purpose, as in Gen. 22:8. The Lord had selected Ephraim for Himself to be a Tyre planted in the meadow, i.e., in a soil adapted for growth and prosperity, had intended for it the bloom and glory of the rich and powerful Tyre; but now, for its apostasy, He would give it up to desolation, and dedicate

its sons, i.e., its people, to death by the sword. The commentators, for the most part, like the LXX, have overlooked this meaning of רָאָה, and therefore have not only been unable to explain *ltsôr* (for a Tyre), but have been driven either to resort to alterations of the text, like *ltsûrâh*, "after the form" (Ewald), or to arbitrary assumptions, e.g., that *tsôr* signifies "palm" after the Arabic (Arnold, Hitzig), or that *ltsôr* means "as far as Tyre" (ל = עַד), in order to bring a more or less forced interpretation into the sentence. The *Vav* before 'Ephraim introduces the apodosis to בָּאֲשֶׁר: "as I have selected Ephraim, so shall Ephraim lead out," etc. On the construction לְהוֹצִיא, see Ewald, § 237, c. In v. 14 the threat rises into an appeal to God to execute the threatened punishment. The excited style of the language is indicated in the interpolated *mah-tittên* (what wilt Thou give?). The words do not contain an intercessory prayer on the part of the prophet, that God will not punish the people too severely but condemn them to barrenness rather than to the loss of the young men (Ewald), but are expressive of holy indignation at the deep corruption of the people.

**Hosea 9:15.** The Lord thereupon replies in v. 15: "All their wickedness is at Gilgal; for there I took them into hatred: for the evil of their doings will I drive them out of my house, and not love them any more; all their princes are rebellions." How far all the wickedness of Ephraim was concentrated at Gilgal it is impossible to determine more precisely, since we have no historical accounts of the idolatrous worship practised there (see at Hosea 4:15). That Gilgal was the scene of horrible human sacrifices, as Hitzig observes at Hosea 12:12, cannot be proved from Hosea 13:2. שָׂנֵא is used here in an inchoative sense, viz., to conceive hatred. On account of their wickedness they should be expelled from the house, i.e., the congregation of Jehovah (see at Hosea 8:1). The expression "I will drive them out of my house" (*mibbêthi 'ăgârshēm*) may be explained from Gen. 21:10, where Sarah requests Abraham to drive

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(*gârash*) Hagar her maid out of the house along with her son, that the son of the maid may not inherit with Isaac, and where God commands the patriarch to carry out Sarah's will. The expulsion of Israel from the house of the Lord is separation from the fellowship of the covenant nation and its blessings, and is really equivalent to loving it no longer. There is a play upon words in the last clause *שָׂרָיָהֶם סוֹרְרִים*.

**Hosea 9:16.** *"Ephraim is smitten: their root is dried up; they will bear no fruit: even if they beget, I slay the treasures of their womb. V. 17. My God rejects them: for they have not hearkened to Him, and they shall be fugitives among the nations."* In v. 16a Israel is compared to a plant, that is so injured by the heat of the sun (Ps. 121:6; 102:5), or by a worm (Jonah 4:7), that it dries up and bears no more fruit. The perfects are a prophetic expression, indicating the certain execution of the threat. This is repeated in v. 16b in figurative language; and the threatening in vv. 11, 12, is thereby strengthened. Lastly, in v. 17 the words of threatening are rounded off by a statement of the reason for the rejection of Israel; and this rejection is described as banishment among the nations, according to Deut. 28:65.

### Hosea 10

**Hosea 10.** In a fresh turn the concluding thought of the last strophe (Hosea 9:10) is resumed, and the guilt and punishment of Israel still more fully described in two sections, vv. 1–8 and 9–15. V. 1. *"Israel is a running vine; it set fruit for itself: the more of its fruit, the more altars did it prepare; the better its land, the better pillars did they make. V. 2. Smooth was their heart, ow will they atone. He will break in pieces their altars, desolate their pillars. V. 3. Yea, now will they say, No king to us! for we feared not Jehovah; and the king, what shall he do to us?"* Under the figure of a vine running luxuriantly, which did indeed set some good fruit, but bore no sound ripe grapes, the prophet describes Israel as a glorious plantation of God Himself, which did not answer the expectations of its Creator. The

figure is simply sketched in a few bold lines. We have an explanatory parallel in Ps. 80:9–12. The participle *bôqēq* does not mean "empty" or "emptying out" here; for this does not suit the next clause, according to which the fruit was set, but from the primary meaning of *bâqaq*, to pour out, pouring itself out, overflowing, i.e., running luxuriantly. It has the same meaning, therefore, as *סָרְחַת* 'ג' in Ezek. 17:6, that which extends its branches far and wide, that is to say, grows most vigorously. The next sentence, "it set fruit," still belongs to the figure; but in the third sentence the figure passes over into a literal prophecy. According to the abundance of its fruit, Israel made many altars; and in proportion to the goodness of its land, it made better pillars (*מַצְבּוֹת*, Baal's pillars (see at 1 Kings 14:23); i.e., as Israel multiplied, and under the blessing of God attained to prosperity, wealth, and power in the good land (Ex. 3:8), it forgot its God, and fell more and more into idolatry (cf. Hosea 2:10; 8:4, 11). The reason of all this was, that their heart was smooth, i.e., dissimulating, not sincerely devoted to the Lord, inasmuch as, under the appearance of devotedness to God, they still clung to idols (for the fact, see 2 Kings 17:9). The word *châlâq*, to be smooth, was mostly applied by a Hebrew to the tongue, lip, mouth, throat, and speech (Ps. 5:10; 12:3; 55:22; Prov. 5:3), and not to the heart. But in Ezek. 12:24 we read of *smooth*, i.e., deceitful prophesying; and there is all the more reason for retaining the meaning "smooth" here, that the rendering "their heart is divided," which is supported by the ancient versions, cannot be grammatically defended. For *châlâq* is not used in *kal* in an intransitive sense; and the active rendering, "He (i.e., God) has divided their heart" (Hitzig), gives an unscriptural thought. They will now atone for this, for God will destroy their altars and pillars. *עָרַף*, "to break the neck of the altars," is a bold expression, applied to the destruction of the altars by breaking off the horns (compare Amos 3:14). Then will the people see and be compelled to confess that it has no longer a king, because it has not feared the Lord, since the king who has

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been set up in opposition to the will of the Lord (Hosea 8:4) cannot bring either help or deliverance (Hosea 13:10). עֲשֵׂה, to do, i.e., to help or be of use to a person (cf. Eccles. 2:2).

**Hosea 10:4–7.** The thoughts of vv. 2, 3 are carried out still further in vv. 4–7. V. 4. “They have spoken words, sworn falsely, made treaties: thus right springs up like darnel in the furrows of the field. V. 5. For the calves of Beth-Aven the inhabitants of Samaria were afraid: yea, its people mourn over it, and its sacred ministers will tremble at it, at its glory, because it has strayed from them. V. 6. Men will also carry it to Asshur, as a present for king Jareb: shame will seize upon Ephraim, and Israel will be put to shame for its counsel.” The dissimulation of heart (v. 3) manifested itself in their speaking words which were nothing but words, i.e., in vain talk (cf. Isa. 58:13), in false swearing, and in the making of treaties. אָלוֹת, by virtue of the parallelism, is an infin. abs. for אָלָה, formed like בָּרַת, analogous to שָׁתוֹת (Isa. 22:13; see Ewald, § 240, b). בָּרַת בָּרִית, in connection with false swearing, must signify the making of a covenant without any truthfulness in it, i.e., the conclusion of treaties with foreign nations—for example, with Assyria—which they were inclined to observe only so long as they could promise themselves advantages from them. In consequence of this, right has become like a bitter plant growing luxuriantly (רוֹשׁ = ראשׁ; see at Deut. 29:17). *Mishpât* does not mean judgment here, or the punitive judgment of God (Chald. and many others), for this could hardly be compared with propriety to weeds running over everything, but *right* in its degeneracy into wrong, or right that men have turned into bitter fruit or poison (Amos 6:12). This spreads about in the kingdom, as weeds spread luxuriantly in the furrows of the field (עֲדָרָה a poetical form for שָׁדָה, like Deut. 32:13, Ps. 8:8). Therefore the judgment cannot be delayed, and is already approaching in so threatening a manner, that the inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the golden calves. The plural *’eglôth* is used with

indefinite generality, and gives no warrant, therefore, for the inference that there were several golden calves set up in Bethel. Moreover, this would be at variance with the fact, that in the sentences which follow we find “the (one) calf” spoken of. The feminine form *’eglôth*, which only occurs here, is also probably connected with the abstract use of the plural, inasmuch as the feminine is the proper form for abstracts. *Bêth-’âven* for *Bêth-’êl*, as in Hosea 4:15. *Shâkhên* is construed with the plural, as an adjective used in a collective sense. כִּי (v. 5) is emphatic, and the suffixes attached to עָמוּ and כִּמְרִי do not refer to Samaria, but to the idol, i.e., the calf, since the prophet distinctly calls Israel, which ought to have been the nation of Jehovah, the nation of its calf-idol, which mourned with its priests (*kmârîm*, the priests appointed in connection with the worship of the calves: see at 2 Kings 23:5) for the carrying away of the calf to Assyria. גִּיל does not mean to exult or rejoice here, nor to tremble (applied to the leaping of the heart from fear, as it does from joy), but has the same meaning as הִיל in Ps. 96:9. עָלֵי-כְבוֹדוֹ, “for its glory,” i.e., not for the temple-treasure at Bethel (Hitzig), nor the one glorious image of the calf, as the symbol of the state-god (Ewald, Umbreit), but the calf, to which the people attributed the glory of the true God. The perfect, *gâlâh*, is used prophetically of that which was as good as complete and certain (for the *fut. exact.*, cf. Ewald, § 343, a). The golden calf, the glory of the nation, will have to wander into exile. This cannot even save itself; it will be taken to Assyria, to king *Jareb* (see at Hosea 5:13), as *minchâh*, a present of tribute (see 2 Sam. 8:2, 6; 1 Kings 5:1). For the construing of the passive with אָת, see Ges. § 143,1, a. Then will Ephraim (= Israel) be seized by reproach and shame. *Boshnâh*, a word only met with here; it is formed from the masculine *bôshen*, which is not used at all (see Ewald, § 163, 164).

**Hosea 10:7, 8.** With the carrying away of the golden calf the kingdom of Samaria also

perishes, and desert plants will grow upon the places of idols. Vv. 7, 8. *“Destroyed is Samaria; her king like a splinter on the surface of the water. And destroyed are the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel: thorn and thistle will rise up on their altars; and they will speak to the mountains, Cover us! and to the hills, Fall on us!”* שְׁמֶרֶן מְלִכָּה is not an asyndeton, “Samaria and its king;” but *Shōmrōn* is to be taken absolutely, “as for Samaria,” although, as a matter of fact, not only Samaria, the capital of the kingdom, but the kingdom itself, was destroyed. For *malkâh* does not refer to any particular king, but is used in a general sense for “the king that Samaria had,” so that the destruction of the monarchy is here predicted (cf. v. 15). The idea that the words refer to one particular king, is not only at variance with the context, which contains no allusion to any one historical occurrence, but does not suit the simile: like a splinter upon the surface of the water, which is carried away by the current, and vanishes without leaving a trace behind. *Qetseph* is not “foam” (Chald., Symm., Rabb.), but a broken branch, a fagot or a splinter, as *qtsâphâh* in Joel 1:7 clearly shows. *Bâmōth ‘âven* are the buildings connected with the image-worship at Bethel (*‘âven = Bêth-’êl*, v. 5), the temple erected there (*bêth bâmōth*), together with the altar, possibly also including other illegal places of sacrifice there, which constituted the chief sin of the kingdom of Israel. These were to be so utterly destroyed, that thorns and thistles would grow upon the ruined altars (cf. Gen. 3:18). “The sign of extreme solitude, that there are not even the walls left, or any traces of the buildings” (Jerome). When the kingdom shall be thus broken up, together with the monarchy and the sacred places, the inhabitants, in their hopeless despair, will long for swift death and destruction. Saying to the mountains, “Cover us,” etc., implies much more than hiding themselves in the holes and clefts of the rocks (Isa. 2:19, 21). It expresses the desire to be buried under the falling mountains and hills, that they may no longer have to bear the pains and terrors of the judgment. In this sense are the words transferred by Christ, in Luke 23:30,

to the calamities attending the destruction of Jerusalem, and in Rev. 6:16 to the terrors of the last judgment.

**Hosea 10:9–15.** After the threatening of punishment has thus been extended in v. 8, even to the utter ruin of the kingdom, the prophet returns in v. 9 to the earlier times, for the purpose of exhibiting in a new form and deeply rooted sinfulness of the people, and then, under cover of an appeal to them to return to righteousness, depicting still further the time of visitation, and (in vv. 14, 15) predicting with still greater clearness the destruction of the kingdom and the overthrow of the monarchy. V. 9. *“Since the days of Gibeah hast thou sinned, O Israel: there have they remained: the war against the sons of wickedness did not overtake them at Gibeah. V. 10. According to my desire shall I chastise them; and nations will be gathered together against them, to bind them to their two transgressions.”* Just as in Hosea 9:9, the days of Gibeah, i.e., the days when that ruthless crime was committed at Gibeah upon the concubine of the Levite, are mentioned as a time of deep corruption; so are those days described in the present passage as the commencement of Israel’s sin. For it is as obvious that מִיָּמֵי is not to be understood in a comparative sense, as it is that the days of Gibeah are not to be taken as referring to the choice of Saul, who sprang from Gibeah, to be their king (Chald.). The following words, שָׁמַר וְגִבְעָה, which are very difficult, and have been variously explained, do not describe the conduct of Israel in those days; for, in the first place, the statement that the war did not overtake them is by no means in harmony with this, since the other tribes avenged that crime so severely that the tribe of Benjamin was almost exterminated; and secondly, the suffix attached to תְּשִׁיגִם evidently refers to the same persons as that appended to אֲסִירִם in v. 10, i.e., to the Israelites of the ten tribes, to which Hosea foretels the coming judgment. These are therefore the subject to שָׁמַר, and consequently

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עמד signifies to stand, to remain, to persevere (cf. Isa. 47:12, Jer. 32:14). There, in Gibeah, did they remain, that is to say, they persevered in the sin of Gibeah, without the war at Gibeah against the sinners overtaking them (the imperfect, in a subordinated clause, used to describe the necessary consequence; and עלוה transposed from עולה, like זערה in Deut. 28:25 for זועה). The meaning is, that since the days of Gibeah the Israelites persist in the same sin as the Gibeahites; but whereas those sinners were punished and destroyed by the war, the ten tribes still live on in the same sin without having been destroyed by any similar war. Jehovah will now chastise them for it. באַזוֹתֵי, in my desire, equivalent to according to my wish,—an anthropomorphic description of the severity of the chastisement. יָסַר וְאָסְרָם from יָסַר (according to Ewald, § 139, a), with the Vav of the apodosis. The chastisement will consist in the fact, that nations will be gathered together against Israel באַסְרָם, lit., at their binding, i.e., when I shall bind them. The *chethib* עֵינָתָם cannot well be the plural of עֵינַי, because the plural עֵינֹת is not used for the eyes; and the rendering, “before their two eyes,” in the sense of “without their being able to prevent it” (Ewald), yields the unheard-of conception of binding a person before his own eyes; and, moreover, the use of עֵינֹתֵי instead of the simple dual would still be left unexplained. We must therefore give the preference to the *keri* עֵינֹת, and regard the *chethib* as another form, that may be accounted for from the transition of the verbs עֵי into עוּ, and עֵינֹת as a contraction of עֵינֹתָ, since עֵינֹתָ cannot be shown to have either the meaning of “sorrow” (Chald., A. E.), or that of the severe labour of “tributary service.” And, moreover, neither of these meanings would give us a suitable thought; whilst the very same objection may be brought against the supposition that the doubleness of the work refers to Ephraim and Judah, which has been

brought against the rendering “to bind to his furrows,” viz., that it would be *non solum ineptum, sed locutionis monstrum*. לְשֵׁתֵי עֵינֹתָם, “to their two transgression” to bind them: i.e., to place them in connection with the transgressions by the punishment, so that they will be obliged to drag them along like beasts of burden. By the two transgressions we are to understand neither the two golden calves at Bethel and Dan (Hitzig), nor unfaithfulness towards Jehovah and devotedness to idols, after Jer. 2:13 (Cyr., Theod.); but their apostasy from Jehovah and the royal house of David, in accordance with Hosea 3:5, where it is distinctly stated that the ultimate conversion of the nation will consist in its seeking Jehovah and David their king.

**Hosea 10:11.** In the next verse the punishment is still further defined, and also extended to Judah. V. 11. “*And Ephraim is an instructed cow, which loves to thresh; and I, I have come over the beauty of her neck: I yoke Ephraim; Judah will plough, Jacob harrow itself.*” *Mlummâdâh*, instructed, trained to work, received its more precise definition from the words “loving to thresh” (*’ôhabhtî*, a participle with the connecting *Yod* in the constructive: see Ewald, § 211, b), not as being easier work in comparison with the hard task of driving, ploughing, and harrowing, but because in threshing the ox was allowed to eat at pleasure (Deut. 25:4), from which Israel became fat and strong (Deut. 32:15). Threshing, therefore, is a figurative representation not of the conquest of other nations (as in Mic. 4:13, Isa. 41:15), but of pleasant, productive, profitable labour. Israel had accustomed itself to this, from the fact that God had bestowed His blessing upon it (Hosea 13:6). But it would be different now. עֵבַרְתִּי עַל, a prophetic perfect: I come over the neck, used in a hostile sense, and answering to our “rushing in upon a person.” The actual idea is that of putting a heavy yoke upon the neck, not of putting a rider upon it. אָרְכִיב not to mount or ride, but to drive, or use for drawing and driving, i.e., to harness, and that, as the following clauses show, to the plough and

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harrow, for the performance of hard field-labour, which figuratively represents subjugation and bondage. Judah is also mentioned here again, as in Hosea 8:14; 6:11, etc. *Jacob*, in connection with Judah, is not a name for the whole nation (or the twelve tribes), but is synonymous with Ephraim, i.e., Israel of the ten tribes. This is required by the correspondence between the last two clauses, which are simply a further development of the expression אֲרָכִיב אֶרְךָ, with an extension of the punishment threatened against Ephraim to Judah also.

**Hosea 10:12, 13.** The call to repentance and reformation of life is then appended in vv. 12, 13, clothed in similar figures. V. 12. "Sow to yourselves for righteousness, reap according to love; plough for yourselves virgin soil: for it is time to seek Jehovah, till He come and rain righteousness upon you. V. 13. Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped crime: eaten the fruit of lying: because thou hast trusted in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." Sowing and reaping are figures used to denote their spiritual and moral conduct. לְצַדִּיקָהּ, for righteousness, is parallel to לְפִי הַסֵּד; i.e., sow that righteousness may be able to spring up like seed, i.e., righteousness towards your fellow-men. The fruit of this will be *chesed*, condescending love towards the poor and wretched. *Nîr nîr*, both here and in Jer. 4:3 to plough virgin soil, i.e., to make land not yet cultivated arable. We have an advance in this figure: they are to give up all their previous course of conduct, and create for themselves a new sphere for their activity, i.e., commence a new course of life. וְעַתָּה, and indeed it is time, equivalent to, for it is high time to give up your old sinful ways and seek the Lord, till (עַד) He come, i.e., till He turn His grace to you again, and cause it to rain upon you. *Tsedeq*, righteousness, not salvation, a meaning which the word never has, and least of all here, where *tsedeq* corresponds to the *tsdâqâh* of the first clause. God causes righteousness to rain, inasmuch as He not only gives strength to

secure it, like rain for the growth of the seed (cf. Isa. 44:3), but must also generate and create it in man by His Spirit (Ps. 51:12). The reason for this summons is given in v. 13, in another allusion to the moral conduct of Israel until now. Hitherto they have ploughed as well as reaped unrighteousness and sin, and eaten lies as the fruit thereof,—lies, inasmuch as they did not promote the prosperity of the kingdom as they imagined, but only led to its decay and ruin. For they did not trust in Jehovah the Creator and rock of salvation, but in their way, i.e., their deeds and their might, in the strength of their army (Amos 6:13), the worthlessness of which they will now discover.

**Hosea 10:14.** "And tumult will arise against thy peoples, and all thy fortifications are laid waste, as Shalman laid Beth-Arbeel waste in the day of the war: mother and children are dashed to pieces. V. 15. Thus hath Bethel done to you because of the wickedness of your wickedness: in the morning dawn the king of Israel is cut off, cut off." קָאם with א as *mater lect.* (Ewald, § 15, e), construed with ב: to rise up against a person, as in Ps. 27:12, Job 16:8. שָׂאוֹן, war, tumult, as in Amos 2:2. בְּעַמִּיּוֹד: against thy people of war. The expression is chosen with a reference to *rôbh gibbôrîm* (the multitude of mighty men), in which Israel put its trust. The meaning, countrymen, or tribes, is restricted to the older language of the Pentateuch. The singular יִשָּׂרָף refers to כָּל, as in Isa. 64:10, contrary to the ordinary language (cf. Ewald, § 317, c). Nothing is known concerning the devastation of Beth-Arbeel by Shalman; and hence there has always been great uncertainty as to the meaning of the words. *Shalman* is no doubt a contracted form of *Shalmanezzer*, the king of Assyria, who destroyed the kingdom of the ten tribes (2 Kings 17:6). *Bêth-'arbē'l* is hardly Arbela of Assyria, which became celebrated through the victory of Alexander (Strab. 16:1, 3), since the Israelites could scarcely have become so well acquainted with such a remote city, as that the prophet could hold up the desolation that befel it as an example to them, but in all probability

the *Arbela* in *Galilaea Superior*, which is mentioned in 1 Macc. 9:2, and very frequently in Josephus, a place in the tribe of Naphtali, between Sephoris and Tiberias (according to Robinson, *Pal.* iii. pp. 281–2, and *Bibl. Researches*, p. 343: the modern *Irbid*). The objection offered by Hitzig,—viz. that *shōd* is a noun in Hosea 9:6; 7:13; 12:2, and that the infinitive construct, with ל prefixed, is written לִשְׂדֵד in Jer. 47:4; and lastly, that if *Shalman* were the subject, we should expect the preposition אֶת before בְּיַת, —is not conclusive, and the attempt which he makes to explain *Salman-Beth-Arbel* from the Sanscrit is not worth mentioning. The clause “mother and children,” etc., a proverbial expression denoting inhuman cruelty (see at Gen. 32:12), does not merely refer to the conduct of *Shalman* in connection with *Beth-Arbel*, possibly in the campaign mentioned in 2 Kings 17:3, but is also intended to indicate the fate with which the whole of the kingdom of Israel was threatened. In v. 16 this threat concludes with an announcement of the overthrow of the monarchy, accompanied by another allusion to the guilt of the people. The subject to כָּבְהָ עֵשָׂה is *Beth-el* (Chald.), not *Shalman* or *Jehovah*. *Bethel*, the seat of the idolatry, prepares this lot for the people on account of its great wickedness. עֵשָׂה is a *perf. proph.* and רַעַת רַעַתְכֶם, wickedness in its second potency, extreme wickedness (cf. Ewald, § 313, c). *Basshachar*, in the morning-dawn, i.e., at the time when prosperity is once more apparently about to dawn, *tempore pacis alluscente* (Cocc., Hgst.). The gerund נִדְמָה adds to the force; and מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל is not this or the other king, but as in v. 7, the king generally, i.e., the monarchy of Israel.

### Hosea 11

**Hosea 11.** The prophet goes back a third time (cf. Hosea 10:1; 9:10) to the early times of Israel, and shows how the people had repaid the Lord, for all the proofs of His love, with

nothing but ingratitude and unfaithfulness; so that it would have merited utter destruction from off the earth, if God should not restrain His wrath for the sake of His unchangeable faithfulness, in order that, after severely chastening, He might gather together once more those that were rescued from among the heathen. V. 1. “When Israel was young, then I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. V. 2. Men called to them; so they went away from their countenance: they offer sacrifice to the Baals, and burn incense to the idols.” V. 1 rests upon Ex. 4:22, 23, where the Lord directs Moses to say to Pharaoh, “Israel is my first-born son; let my son go, that he may serve me.” Israel was the son of Jehovah, by virtue of its election to be Jehovah’s peculiar people (see at Ex. 4:22). In this election lay the ground for the love which God showed to Israel, by bringing it out of Egypt, to give it the land of Canaan, promised to the fathers for its inheritance. The adoption of Israel as the son of Jehovah, which began with its deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, and was completed in the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, forms the first stage in the carrying out of the divine work of salvation, which was completed in the incarnation of the Son of God for the redemption of mankind from death and ruin. The development and guidance of Israel as the people of God all pointed to Christ; not, however, in any such sense as that the nation of Israel was to bring forth the son of God from within itself, but in this sense, that the relation which the Lord of heaven and earth established and sustained with that nation, was a preparation for the union of God with humanity, and paved the way for the incarnation of His Son, by the fact that Israel was trained to be a vessel of divine grace. All essential factors in the history of Israel point to this as their end, and thereby become types and material prophecies of the life of Him in whom the reconciliation of man to God was to be realized, and the union of God with the human race to be developed into a personal unity. It is in this sense that the second half of our verse is quoted in Matt. 2:15 as a prophecy of Christ, not because the words of the prophet refer directly



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and immediately to Christ, but because the sojourn in Egypt, and return out of that land, had the same significance in relation to the development of the life of Jesus Christ, as it had to the nation of Israel. Just as Israel grew into a nation in Egypt, where it was out of the reach of Canaanitish ways, so was the child Jesus hidden in Egypt from the hostility of Herod. But v. 2 is attached thus as an antithesis: this love of its God was repaid by Israel with base apostasy. **קָרְאוּ**, they, viz., the prophets (cf. v. 7; 2 Kings 17:13; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; Zech. 1:4), called to them, called the Israelites to the Lord and to obedience to Him; but they (the Israelites) went away from their countenance, would not hearken to the prophets, or come to the Lord (Jer. 2:31). The thought is strengthened by **בָּן**, with the **בְּאִשָּׁר** of the protasis omitted (Ewald, § 360, a): as the prophets called, so the Israelites drew back from them, and served idols. **בְּעֵלִים** as in Hosea 2:15, and **פָּסְלִים** as in 2 Kings 17:41 and Deut. 7:5, 25 (see at Ex. 20:4).

**Hosea 11:3, 4.** Nevertheless the Lord continued to show love to them. Vv. 3, 4. *“And I, I have taught Ephraim to walk: He took them in His arms, and they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with bands of a man, with cords of love, and became to them like a lifter up of the yoke upon their jaws, and gently towards him did I give (him) food.”* **תִּרְגַּלְתִּי**, a *hiphil*, formed after the Aramaean fashion (cf. Ges. § 55, 5), by hardening the **ה** into **ת**, and construed with **ל**, as the *hiphil* frequently is (e.g., Hosea 10:1; Amos 8:9), a *denom.* of **רָגַל**, to teach to walk, to guide in leading-strings, like a child that is being trained to walk. It is a figurative representation of paternal care for a child's prosperity. **קָהָם**, *per aphaeresin*, for **לְקָהָם**, like **קָהָם** for **לְקָהָם** in Ezek. 17:5. The sudden change from the first person to the third seems very strange to our ears; but it is not uncommon in Hebrew, and is to be accounted for here from the fact, that the prophet could very easily pass from speaking in the name of God to speaking

of God Himself. **קָהָם** cannot be either an infinitive or a participle, on account of the following word **זְרוּעֵתָיו**, *his arms*. The two clauses refer chiefly to the care and help afforded by the Lord to His people in the Arabian desert; and the prophet had Deut. 1:31 floating before his mind: “in the wilderness the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son.” The last clause also refers to this, **רָפְאוּתָם** pointing back to Ex. 15:26, where the Lord showed Himself as the physician of Israel, by making the bitter water at Marah drinkable, and at the same time as their helper out of every trouble. In v. 4, again, there is a still further reference to the manifestation of the love of God to Israel on the journey through the wilderness. **חֲבָלֵי אָדָם**, cords with which men are led, more especially children that are weak upon their feet, in contrast with ropes, with which men control wild, unmanageable beasts (Ps. 32:9), are a figurative representation of the paternal, human guidance of Israel, as explained in the next figure, “cords of love.” This figure leads on to the kindred figure of the yoke laid upon beasts, to harness them for work. As merciful masters lift up the yoke upon the cheeks of their oxen, i.e., push it so far back that the animals can eat their food in comfort, so has the Lord made the yoke of the law, which has been laid upon His people, both soft and light. As **הָרִים** **עַל** **עַל** does not mean to take the yoke away from (מֵעַל) the cheeks, but to lift it above the cheeks, i.e., to make it easier, by pushing it back, we cannot refer the words to the liberation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, but can only think of what the Lord did, to make it easy for the people to observe the commandments imposed upon them, when they were received into His covenant (Ex. 24:3, 7), including not only the many manifestations of mercy which might and ought to have allured them to reciprocate His love, and yield a willing obedience to His commandments, but also the means of grace provided in their worship, partly in the institution of sacrifice, by which a way of approach was opened to divine grace to

obtain forgiveness of sin, and partly in the institution of feasts, at which they could rejoice in the gracious gifts of their God. נָאֵט is not the first pers. imperf. *hiphil* of נָטָה ("I inclined myself to him;" Symm., Syr., and others), in which case we should expect נָאֵט, but an adverb, softly, comfortably; and אֶלְיָי belongs to it, after the analogy of 2 Sam. 18:5. אֶזְכִּיר is an anomalous formation for אֶזְכָּרְכִּיל, like אֶזְכָּרְכִּי for אֶזְכָּרְכִּי in Jer. 46:8 (cf. Ewald, § 192, *d*; Ges. § 68, 2, Anm. 1). Jerome has given the meaning quite correctly: "and I gave them manna for food in the desert, which they enjoyed."

**Hosea 11:5-7.** By despising this love, Israel brings severe punishment upon itself. V. 5. *"It will not return into the land of Egypt; but Asshur, he is its king, because they refused to return.* V. 6. *And the sword will sweep round in its cities, and destroy its bolts, and devour, because of their counsels.* V. 7. *My people is bent upon apostasy from me: and if men call it upwards, it does not raise itself at all.*" The apparent contradiction between the words, "It will not return into the land of Egypt," and the threat contained in Hosea 8:13; 9:3, that Israel should return to Egypt, ought not to lead us to resort to alterations of the text, or to take לֵא in the sense of לָו, and connect it with the previous verse, as is done by the LXX, Mang., and others, or to make an arbitrary paraphrase of the words, either by taking לֵא in the sense of הֲלֵא, and rendering it as a question, "Should it not return?" equivalent to "it will certainly return" (Maurer, Ewald, etc.); or by understanding the return to Egypt as signifying the longing of the people for help from Egypt (Rosenmüller). The emphatic הוֹנֵא of the second clause is at variance with all these explanations, since they not only fail to explain it, but it points unmistakeably to an antithesis: "Israel will not return to Egypt; but Asshur, it shall be its king," i.e., it shall come under the dominion of Assyria. The supposed contradiction is removed as soon as we observe that in Hosea 8:13; 9:3, 6, Egypt is a type of the

land of bondage; whereas here the typical interpretation is precluded partly by the contrast to Asshur, and still more by the correspondence in which the words stand to v. 1*b*. Into the land from which Jehovah called His people, Israel shall not return, lest it should appear as though the object, for which it had been brought out of Egypt and conducted miraculously through the desert, had been frustrated by the impenitence of the people. But it is to be brought into another bondage. וְאֲשׁוּר is appended adversatively. Asshur shall rule over it as king, because they refuse to return, sc. to Jehovah. The Assyrians will wage war against the land, and conquer it. The sword (used as a principal weapon, to denote the destructive power of war) will circulate in the cities of Israel, make the round of the cities as it were, and destroy its bolts, i.e., the bolts of the gates of the fortifications of Ephraim. *Baddim*, poles (Ex. 25:13ff.), cross-poles or cross-beams, with which the gates were fastened, hence bolts in the literal sense, as in Job 17:16, and not tropically for "princes" (Ges.), *electi* (Jer., Chald., etc.). "On account of their counsels:" this is more fully defined in v. 7. וְעַמִּי, and my people (= since my people) are harnessed to apostasy from me (*mshūbhâthî*, with an objective suffix). תְּלוּאִים, lit., suspended on apostasy, i.e., not "swaying about in consequence of apostasy or in constant danger of falling away" (Chald., Syr., Hengst.), since this would express too little in the present context and would not suit the second half of the verse, but impaled or fastened upon apostasy as upon a stake, so that it cannot get loose. Hence the constructing of תְּלוּאִים with ל instead of עַל or ב (2 Sam. 18:10), may be accounted for from the use of the verb in a figurative sense. אֶלְיָעַל, upwards (עַל as in Hosea 7:16), do they (the prophets: see v. 2) call them; but *it* does not rise, sc. to return to God, or seek help from on high. רֹמֵם *pilel*, with the meaning of the *kal* intensified, to make a rising, i.e., to rise up. This explanation appears simpler than supplying an object, say "the soul" (Ps. 25:1), or "the eyes" (Ezek. 33:25).

**Hosea 11:8, 9.** They deserved to be utterly destroyed for this, and would have been if the compassion of God had not prevented it. With this turn a transition is made in v. 8 from threatening to promise. V. 8. *“How could I give thee up, O Ephraim! surrender thee, O Israel! how could I give thee up like Admah, make thee like Zeboim! My heart has changed within me, my compassion is excited all at once.* V. 9. *I will not execute the burning heat of my wrath, I will not destroy Ephraim again: for I am God, and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee: and come not into burning wrath.”* “How thoroughly could I give thee up!” sc. if I were to punish thy rebellion as it deserved. *Nâthan*, to surrender to the power of the enemy, like *miggên* in Gen. 14:20. And not that alone, but I could utterly destroy thee, like Admah and Zeboim, the two cities of the valley of Siddim, which were destroyed by fire from heaven along with Sodom and Gomorrha. Compare Deut. 29:22, where Admah and Zeboim are expressly mentioned along with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, which stand alone in Gen. 19:24. With evident reference to this passage, in which Moses threatens idolatrous Israel with the same punishment, Hosea simply mentions the last two as quite sufficient for his purpose, whereas Sodom and Gomorrha are generally mentioned in other passages (Jer. 49:18; cf. Matt. 10:15, Luke 10:12). The promise that God will show compassion is appended here, without any adversative particle. My heart has turned, changed in me (על, lit., upon or with me, as in the similar phrases in 1 Sam. 25:36, Jer. 8:18). יחד נקמרו, in a body have my feelings of compassion gathered themselves together, i.e., my whole compassion is excited. Compare Gen. 43:30 and 1 Kings 3:26, where, instead of the abstract *nichûmîm*, we find the more definite *rachâmîm*, the bowels as the seat of the emotions. עשה חרון אף, to carry out wrath, to execute it as judgment (as in 1 Sam. 28:18). In the expression לא אשוב לשהת, I will not return to destroy, שוב may be explained from the previous להפך לבי. After the heart of God has

changed, it will not return to wrath, to destroy Ephraim; for Jehovah is God, who does not alter His purposes like a man (cf. 1 Sam. 15:29, Num. 23:19, Mal. 3:6), and He shows Himself in Israel as the Holy One, i.e., the absolutely pure and perfect one, in whom there is no alternation of light and darkness, and therefore no variableness in His decrees (see at Ex. 19:6; Isa. 6:3). The difficult expression בעיר cannot mean “into a city,” although it is so rendered by the ancient versions, the Rabbins, and many Christian expositors; for we cannot attach any meaning to the words “I do not come into a city” at all in harmony with the context. עיר signifies here *aestus irae*, the heat of wrath, from עור, *effervescere*, just as in Jer. 15:8 it signifies the heat of alarm and anxiety, *aestus animi*.

**Hosea 11:10.** *“They will go after Jehovah; like a lion will He roar; for He will roar: and sons will tremble from the sea. V. 11. Tremble like birds out of Egypt, and like doves out of the land of Asshur: and I cause them to dwell in their houses, is the saying of Jehovah.”* When the Lord turns His pity towards the people once more, they will follow Him, and hasten, with trembling at His voice, from the lands of their banishment, and be reinstated by Him in their inheritance. The way for this promise was opened indeed by v. 9, but here it is introduced quite abruptly, and without any logical particle of connection, like the same promise in Hosea 3:5. הלך אחרי יי, to walk after the Lord, denotes not only “obedience to the gathering voice of the Lord, as manifested by their drawing near” (Simson), but that walking in true obedience to the Lord which follows from conversion (Deut. 13:5; 1 Kings 14:8), so that the Chaldee has very properly rendered it, “They will follow the worship of Jehovah.” This faithfulness they will exhibit first of all in practical obedience to the call of the Lord. This call is described as the roaring of a lion, the point of comparison lying simply in the fact that a lion announces its coming by roaring, so that the roaring merely indicates a loud, far-reaching call, like the

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blowing of the trumpet in Isa. 27:13. The reason for what is affirmed is then given: "for He (Jehovah) will really utter His call," in consequence of which the Israelites, as His children, will come trembling (*chârēd* synonymous with *pâchad*, Hosea 3:5). מִיָּם, from the sea, i.e., from the distant islands and lands of the west (Isa. 11:11), as well as from Egypt and Assyria, the lands of the south and east. These three regions are simply a special form of the idea, "out of all quarters of the globe;" compare the more complete enumeration of the several remote countries in Isa. 11:11. The comparison to birds and doves expresses the swiftness with which they draw near, as doves fly to their dovecots (Isa. 60:8). Then will the Lord cause them to dwell in their houses, i.e., settle them once more in their inheritance, in His own land (cf. Jer. 32:37, where לְבָטַח is added). On the construing of הוֹשִׁיב with עַל, cf. 1 Kings 20:43, and the German *auf der Stube sein*. The expression וְנִסְּמָם affixes the seal of confirmation to this promise. The fulfilment takes place in the last says, when Israel as a nation shall enter the kingdom of God. Compare the remarks on this point at Hosea 2:1–3 (pp. 33, 34).

## Hosea 12

### Israel's Apostasy and God's Fidelity—Ch. 12–14

**Hosea 12–14.** For the purpose of proving that the predicted destruction of the kingdom is just and inevitable, the prophet now shows, in this last division, first that Israel has not kept the ways of its father Jacob, but has fallen into the ungodly practice of Canaan (Hosea 12); and secondly, that in spite of all the manifestations of love, and all the chastisements received from its God, it has continued its apostasy and idolatry, and therefore perfectly deserves the threatened judgment. Nevertheless the compassion of God will not permit it to be utterly destroyed, but will redeem it even from death and hell (Hosea 13–14:1). To this there is appended, lastly, in Hosea 14:2–9, a call to conversion, and a promise from God of the

forgiveness and abundant blessing of those who turn to the Lord. With this the book closes (Hosea 14:10). Thus we find again, that the contents of this last division fall very evidently into three parts (Hosea 12:13, 14, and 14:2–10), each of which is still further divisible into two strophes.

### *Israel's Degeneracy into Canaanitish Ways—*Ch. 12 (Eng. Ver. 11:12–12)

**Hosea 11:12–12:14.** The faithlessness of Israel and Judah's resistance to God bring righteous punishment upon the entire posterity of Jacob (Hosea 11:12–12:2); whereas the example of their forefather ought to have led them to faithful attachment to their God (vv. 3–6). But Israel has become Canaan, and seeks its advantage in deception and injustice, without hearkening to its God or to the voice of its prophets, and will be punished for its idolatry (vv. 7–11). Whereas Jacob was obliged to flee, and to serve for a wife in Aram, Jehovah led Israel out of Egypt, and guarded it by prophets. Nevertheless this nation has excited His wrath, and will have to bear its guilt (vv. 12–14). The two strophes of this chapter are 11:12–12:6 and 7–14.

**Hosea 11:12.** (Heb. Bib. 12:1). *"Ephraim has surrounded me with lying, and the house of Israel with deceit: and Judah is moreover unbridled against God, and against the faithful Holy One.* Ch. 12:1 (Heb. Bib. 2). *Ephraim grazeth wind, and hunteth after the east: all the day it multiplies lying and desolation, and they make a covenant with Asshur, and oil is carried to Egypt. V. 2. And Jehovah has a controversy with Judah, and to perform a visitation upon Jacob, according to his ways: according to his works will He repay him."* In the name of Jehovah, the prophet raises a charge against Israel once more. Lying and deceit are the terms which he applies, not so much to the idolatry which they preferred to the worship of Jehovah (ψευδῆ καὶ δυσσεβῆ λατρείαν, Theod.), as to the hypocrisy with which Israel, in spite of its idolatry, claimed to be still the people of Jehovah, pretended to worship Jehovah under the image

of a calf, and turned right into wrong. *Bēth Yisrā'el* (the house of Israel) is the nation of the ten tribes, and is synonymous with Ephraim. The statement concerning Judah has been interpreted in different ways, because the meaning of רָד is open to dispute. Luther's rendering, "but Judah still holds fast to its God," is based upon the rabbinical interpretation of רָד, in the sense of רָדָה, to rule, which is decidedly false. According to the Arabic *rād*, the meaning of *rūd* is to ramble about (used of cattle that have broken loose, or have not yet been fastened up, as in Jer. 2:31); *hiphil*, to cause to ramble about (Gen. 27:40; Ps. 55:3). Construed as it is here with עָם, it means to ramble about in relation to God, i.e., to be unbridled or unruly towards God. עָם, as in many other cases where reciprocal actions are referred to, standing towards or with a person: see Ewald, § 217, *h.* קְדוֹשִׁים נֶאֱמָן, the faithful, holy God. *Qdōshim* is used of God, as in Prov. 9:10 (cf. Josh. 24:19), as an intensive *pluralis majestatis*, construed with a singular adjective (cf. Isa. 19:4; 2 Kings 19:4). נֶאֱמָן, firm, faithful, trustworthy; the opposite of *rād*. Judah is unbridled towards the powerful God ('*El*), towards the Holy One, who, as the Faithful One, also proves Himself to be holy in relation to His people, both by the sanctification of those who embrace His salvation, and also by the judgment and destruction of those who obstinately resist the leadings of His grace. In v. 1 the lying and deceit of Israel are more fully described. רָעָה רִיחַ is not to entertain one's self on wind, i.e., to take delight in vain things; but רָעָה means to eat or graze spiritually; and *rūäch*, the wind, is equivalent to emptiness. The meaning therefore is, to strive eagerly after what is empty or vain; synonymous with *rādaph*, to pursue. קָדִים, the east wind, in Palestine a fierce tempestuous wind, which comes with burning heat from the desert of Arabia, and is very destructive to seeds and plants (compare Job 27:21, and Wetzstein's Appendix to Delitzsch's *Commentary on Job*). It

is used, therefore, as a figurative representation, not of vain hopes and ideals, that cannot possibly be reached, but of that destruction which Israel is bringing upon itself. "All the day," i.e., continually, it multiplies lying and violence, through the sins enumerated in Hosea 4:2, by which the kingdom is being internally broken up. Added to this, there is the seeking for alliances with the powers of the world, viz., Assyria and Egypt, by which it hopes to secure their help (Hosea 5:13), but only brings about its own destruction. Oil is taken to Egypt from the land abounding in olives (Deut. 8:8; 1 Kings 5:25), not as tribute, but as a present, for the purpose of securing an ally in Egypt. This actually took place during the reign of Hoshea, who endeavoured to liberate himself from the oppression of Assyria by means of a treaty with Egypt (2 Kings 17:4). The Lord will repay both kingdoms for such conduct as this. But just as the attitude of Judah towards God is described more mildly than the guilt of Israel in Hosea 11:12, so the punishment of the two is differently described in v. 2. Jehovah has a trial with Judah, i.e., He has to reprove and punish its sins and transgressions (Hosea 4:1). Upon Jacob, or Israel of the ten tribes (as in Hosea 10:11), He has to perform a visitation, i.e., to punish it according to its ways and its deeds (cf. Hosea 4:9). לְפָקֵד, it is to be visited, i.e., He must visit.

**Hosea 12:3.** "He held his brother's heel in the womb, and in his man's strength he fought with God. V. 4. He fought against the angel, and overcame; wept, and prayed to Him: at Bethel he found Him, and there He talked with us. V. 5. And Jehovah, God of hosts, Jehovah is His remembrance." The name Jacob, which refers to the patriarch himself in v. 3, forms the link between vv. 2 and 3. The Israelites, as descendants of Jacob, were to strive to imitate the example of their forefather. His striving hard for the birthright, and his wrestling with God, in which he conquered by prayer and supplication, are types and pledges of salvation to the tribes of Israel which bear his name. עָקַב, a denom. from עָקַב, "to hold the heel" = אָחָז

בְּעֶקֶב in Gen. 25:26, which the prophet has in his mind, not “to overreach,” as in Gen. 27:36 and Jer. 9:3. For the wrestling with God, mentioned in the second clause of the verse, proves most indisputably that Jacob’s conduct is not held up before the people for a warning, as marked by cunning or deceit, as Umbreit and Hitzig suppose, but is set before them for their imitation, as an eager attempt to secure the birthright and the blessing connected with it. This shows at the same time, that the holding of the heel in the mother’s womb is not quoted as a proof of the divine election of grace, and, in fact, that there is no reference at all to the circumstance, that “even when Jacob was still in his mother’s womb, he did this not by his own strength, but by the mercy of God, who knows and loves those whom He has predestinated” (Jerome). בְּאַוֹנוֹ, is his manly strength (cf. Gen. 49:3) he wrestled with God (Gen. 32:25–29). This conflict (for the significance of which in relation to Jacob’s spiritual life, see the discussion at Gen. *l.c.*) is more fully described in v. 4, for the Israelites to imitate. מְלֹאֲדֵי is the angel of Jehovah, the revealer of the invisible God (see the *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, pp. 118ff. transl.). וַיִּבֶל is from Gen. 32:29. The explanatory clause, “he wept, and made supplication to Him” (after Gen. 32:27), gives the nature of the conflict. It was a contest with the weapons of prayer; and with these he conquered. These weapons are also at the command of the Israelites, if they will only use them. The fruit of the victory was, that he (Jacob) found Him (God) at Bethel. This does not refer to the appearance of God to Jacob on his flight to Mesopotamia (Gen. 28:11), but to that recorded in Gen. 35:9ff., when God confirmed his name of Israel, and renewed the promises of His blessing. And there, continues the prophet, He (God) spake with us; i.e., not there He speaks with us still, condemning by His prophets the idolatry at Bethel (Amos 5:4, 5), as Kimchi supposes; but, as the imperfect יְדַבֵּר corresponds to וַיִּמְצְאֵנוּ, “there did He speak to us through Jacob,” i.e., what He there said to

Jacob applies to us. The explanation of this is given in v. 5, where the name is recalled in which God revealed Himself to Moses, when He first called him (Ex. 3:15), i.e., in which He made known to him His true nature. *Yhōvâh zikhrō* is taken literally from יְהוָה זָכְרִי לְדֶרֶךְ; but there the name *Jehovah* is still further defined by “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” here by “the God of hosts.” This difference needs consideration. The Israelites in the time of Moses could only put full confidence in the divine call of Moses to be their deliverer out of the bondage of Egypt, on the ground that He who called him was the God who had manifested Himself to the patriarchs as the God of salvation; but for the Israelites of Hosea’s time, the strength of their confidence in Jehovah arose from the fact that Jehovah was the God of hosts, i.e., the God who, because He commands the forces of heaven, both visible and invisible, rules with unrestricted omnipotence on earth as well as in heaven (see at 1 Sam. 1:3).

**Hosea 12:6.** To this God Israel is now to return. V. 6. “*And thou, to thy God shalt thou turn: keep love and right, and hope continually in thy God.*” וְשׁוּב with כִּי is a pregnant expression, as in Isa. 10:22: “so to turn as to enter into vital fellowship with God;” i.e., to be truly converted. The next two clauses, as the omission of the copula before *chesed* and the change in the tense clearly show, are to be taken as explanatory of וְשׁוּב. The conversion is to show itself in the perception of love and right towards their brethren, and in constant trust in God. But Israel is far removed from this now. This thought leads the way to the next strophe (vv. 8–15), which commences afresh with a disclosure of the apostasy of the people.

**Hosea 12:7.** “*Canaan, in his hand is the scale of cheating: he loves to oppress.* V. 8. *And Ephraim says, Yet I have become rich, have acquired property: all my exertions bring me no wrong, which would be sin.*” Israel is not a Jacob who wrestles with God; but it has become Canaan, seeking its advantage in deceit and wrong.

Israel is called *Canaan* here, not so much on account of its attachment to Canaanitish idolatry (cf. Ezek. 16:3), as according to the appellative meaning of the word *Kna'an*, which is borrowed from the commercial habits of the Canaanites (Phoenicians), viz., merchant or trader (Isa. 23:8; Job 40:30), because, like a fraudulent merchant, it strove to become great by oppression and cheating; not "because it acted towards God like a fraudulent merchant, offering Him false show for true reverence," as Schmieder supposes. For however thoroughly this may apply to the worship of the Israelites, it is not to this that the prophet refers, but to fraudulent weights, and the love of oppression or violence. And this points not to their attitude towards God, but to their conduct towards their fellow-men, which is the very opposite of what, according to the previous verse, the Lord requires (*chesed ūmishpāt*), and the very thing which He has forbidden in the law, in Lev. 19:36, Deut. 24:13–16, and also in the case of *'ashaq*, violence, in Lev. 6:2–4, Deut. 24:14. Ephraim prides itself upon this unrighteousness, in the idea that it has thereby acquired wealth and riches, and with the still greater self-deception, that with all its acquisition of property it has committed no wrong that was sin, i.e., that would be followed by punishment. *חַס* does not mean "might" here, but wealth, *opes*, although as a matter of fact, since Ephraim says this as a nation, the riches and power of the state are intended. *כָּל-יְגִיעִי* is not written at the head absolutely, in the sense of "so far as what I have acquired is concerned, men find no injustice in this;" for it that were the case, *בִּי* would stand for *לִי*; but it is really the subject, and *יִמְצָא* is to be taken in the sense of acquiring = bringing in (cf. Lev. 5:7; 12:8, etc.).

**Hosea 12:9.** "Yet am I Jehovah thy God, from the land of Egypt hither: I will still cause thee to dwell in tents, as in the days of the feast. V. 10. I have spoken to the prophets; and I, I have multiplied visions, and spoken similitudes through the prophets. V. 11. If Gilead (is) worthless, they have only come to nothing: in

*Gilgal they offered bullocks: even their altars are like stone-heaps in the furrows of the field."* The Lord meets the delusion of the people, that they had become great and powerful through their own exertion, by reminding them that *He* (*אֲנֹכִי* is adversative, yet I) has been Israel's God from Egypt hither, and that to Him they owe all prosperity and good in both past and present (cf. Hosea 13:4). Because they do not recognise this, and because they put their trust in unrighteousness rather than in Him, He will now cause them to dwell in tents again, as in the days of the feast of Tabernacles, i.e., will repeat the leading through the wilderness. It is evident from the context that *mō'ed* (the feast) is here the feast of Tabernacles. *יְמֵי מוֹעֵד* (the days of the feast) are the seven days of this festival, during which Israel was to dwell in booths, in remembrance of the fact that when God led them out of Egypt He had caused them to dwell in booths (tabernacles, Lev. 23:42, 43). *אֲדָ אוֹשִׁיבָךְ הוֹשַׁבְתָּי* stands in antithesis to *הוֹשַׁבְתָּי* in Lev. 23:43. "The preterite is changed into a future through the ingratitude of the nation" (Hengstenberg). The simile, "as in the days of the feast," shows that the repetition of the leading through the desert is not thought of here merely as a time of punishment, such as the prolongation of the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years really was (Num. 14:33). For their dwelling in tents, or rather in booths (*sukkōth*), on the feast of Tabernacles, was intended not so much to remind the people of the privations of their unsettled wandering life in the desert, as to call to their remembrance the shielding and sheltering care and protection of God in their wandering through the great and terrible wilderness (see at Lev. 23:42, 43). We must combine the two allusions, therefore: so that whilst the people are threatened indeed with being driven out of the good and glorious land, with its large and beautiful cities and houses full of all that is good (Deut. 6:10ff.), into a dry and barren desert, they have also set before them the repetition of the divine guidance through the desert; so that they are not

threatened with utter rejection on the part of God, but only with temporary banishment into the desert. In vv. 10 and 11 the two thoughts of v. 9 are still further expanded. In v. 10 they are reminded how the Lord had proved Himself to be the God of Israel from Egypt onwards, by sending prophets and multiplying prophecy, to make known His will and gracious counsel to the people, and to promote their salvation. דָּבַר with לַעֲלֹם, to speak to, not because the word is something imposed upon a person, but because the inspiration of God came down to the prophets from above. אֲדַמָּה, not "I destroy," for it is only the *kal* that occurs in this sense, and not the *piel*, but "to compare," i.e., speak in similes; as, for example, in Hosea 1 and 3, Isa. 5:1ff., Ezek. 16 etc.: "I have left no means of admonishing them untried" (Rosenmüller). Israel, however, has not allowed itself to be admonished and warned, but has given itself up to sin and idolatry, the punishment of which cannot be delayed. Gilead and Gilgal represent the two halves of the kingdom of the ten tribes; Gilead the land to the east of the Jordan, and Gilgal the territory to the west. As Gilead is called "a city (i.e., a rendezvous) of evil-doers" (פְּעֻלֵי אֲוֵן) in Hosea 6:8, so is it here called distinctly אֲוֵן, worthlessness, wickedness; and therefore it is to be utterly brought to nought. אֲוֵן and אֲשָׁמָה are synonymous, denoting moral and physical nonentity (compare Job 15:31). Here the two notions are so distributed, that the former denotes the moral decay, the latter the physical. Worthlessness brings nothingness after it as a punishment. אֲשָׁמָה, only = nothing, but equivalent to utterly. The perfect הָיָה is used for the certain future. Gilgal, which is mentioned in Hosea 4:15; 9:15, as the seat of one form of idolatrous worship, is spoken of here as a place of sacrifice, to indicate with a play upon the name the turning of the altars into heaps of stones (*Gallim*). The desolation or destruction of the altars involves not only the cessation of the idolatrous worship, but the dissolution of the kingdom and the banishment of the people

out of the land. שְׁוֹרִים, which only occurs in the plural here, cannot of course be the dative (to sacrifice to oxen), but only the accusative. The sacrifice of oxen was reckoned as a sin on the part of the people, not on account of the animals offers, but on account of the unlawful place of sacrifice. The suffix to *mizbchōthâm* (their sacrifices) refers to Israel, the subject implied in *zibbēchū*.

**Hosea 12:12-14.** This punishment Israel well deserved. V. 12. "And Jacob fled to the fields of Aram; and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife did he keep guard. V. 13. And through a prophet Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt, and through a prophet was he guarded. V. 14. Ephraim has stirred up bitter wrath; and his Lord will leave his blood upon him, and turn back his shame upon him." In order to show the people still more impressively what great things the Lord had done for them, the prophet recalls the flight of Jacob, the tribe-father, to Mesopotamia, and how he was obliged to serve many years there for a wife, and to guard cattle; whereas God had redeemed Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, and had faithfully guarded it through a prophet. The flight of Jacob to Aramaea, and his servitude there, are mentioned not "to give prominence to his zeal for the blessing of the birthright, and his obedience to the commandment of God and his parents" (Cyr., Theod., Th. v. Mops.); nor "to bring out the double servitude of Israel,—the first the one which the people had to endure in their forefather, the second the one which they had to endure themselves in Egypt" (Umbreit); nor "to lay stress upon the manifestation of the divine care towards Jacob as well as towards the people of Israel" (Ewald); for there is nothing at all about this in v. 12. The words point simply to the distress and affliction which Jacob had to endure, according to Gen. 29-31, as Calvin has correctly interpreted them. "Their father Jacob," he says, "who was he? what was his condition? ... He was a fugitive from his country. Even if he had always lived at home, his father was only a stranger in the land. But he was compelled to flee into Syria. And how



splendidly did he live there? He was with his uncle, no doubt, but he was treated quite as meanly as any common slave: *he served for a wife*. And how did he serve? He was the man who tended the cattle." *Shâmar*, the tending of cattle, was one of the hardest and lowest descriptions of servitude (cf. Gen. 30:31; 31:40; 1 Sam. 17:20). *Sdêh 'ârâm* (the field of Aram) is no doubt simply the Hebrew rendering of the Aramaean *Paddan-'ârâm* (Gen. 28:2; 31:18: see at Gen. 25:20). Jacob's flight to Aramaea, where he had to serve, is contrasted in v. 10 with the leading of Israel, the people sprung from Jacob, out of Egypt by a prophet, i.e., by Moses (cf. Deut. 18:18); and the guarding of cattle by Jacob is placed in contrast with the guarding of Israel on the part of God through the prophet Moses, when he led them through the wilderness to Canaan. The object of this is to call to the nation's remembrance that elevation from the lowest condition, which they were to acknowledge with humility every year, according to Deut. 26:5ff., when the first-fruits were presented before the Lord. For Ephraim had quite forgotten this. Instead of thanking the Lord for it by love and faithful devotedness to Him, it had provoked Him in the bitterest manner by its sins (הִקְעִיס), to excite wrath, to provoke to anger: *tamrûrîm*, an adverbial accusative = bitterly). For this should its blood-guiltiness remain upon it. According to Lev. 20:9ff., *dâmîm* denotes grave crimes that are punishable by death. *Nâtash*, to let a thing alone, as in Ex. 23:11; or to leave behind, as in 1 Sam. 17:20; 22:28. Leaving blood-guiltiness upon a person, is the opposite of taking away (אָשַׁף) or forgiving the sin, and therefore inevitably brings the punishment after it. *Cherpâthô* (its reproach or dishonour) is the dishonour which Ephraim had done to the Lord by sin and idolatry (cf. Isa. 65:7). And this would be repaid to it by its Lord, i.e., by Jehovah.

## Hosea 13

### Israel's Deep Fall—Ch. 13–14:1

**Hosea 13:1–14:1.** Because Israel would not desist from its idolatry, and entirely forgot the goodness of its God, He would destroy its might and glory (vv. 1–8). Because it did not acknowledge the Lord as its help, its throne would be annihilated along with its capital; but this judgment would become to all that were penitent a regeneration to newness of life. V. 1. "When Ephraim spake, there was terror; he exalted himself in Israel; then he offended through Baal, and died. V. 2. And now they continue to sin, and make themselves molten images out of their silver, idols according to their understanding: manufacture of artists is it all: they say of them, Sacrificers of men: let them kiss calves." In order to show how deeply Israel had fallen through its apostasy, the prophet points to the great distinction which the tribe of Ephraim formerly enjoyed among the tribes of Israel. The two clauses of v. 1a cannot be so connected together as that אָשַׁף should be taken as a continuation of the infinitive דָּבַר. The emphatic הוּא is irreconcilable with this. We must rather take דָּבַר (ἀπ. λεγ., in Aramaean = טַרְטַר, Jer. 49:24, terror, *tremor*) as the apodosis to *kdabbēr* 'Ephraim (when Ephraim spake), like אָשַׁף in Gen. 4:7: "As Ephraim spake there was terror," i.e., men listened with fear and trembling (cf. Job 29:21). אָשַׁף is used intransitively, as in Nahum 1:5, Ps. 89:10. Ephraim, i.e., the tribe of Ephraim, "exalted itself in Israel,"—not "it was distinguished among its brethren" (Hitzig), but "it raised itself to the government." The prophet has in his mind the attempts made by Ephraim to get the rule among the tribes, which led eventually to the secession of the ten tribes from the royal family of David, and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel by the side of that of Judah. When Ephraim had secured this, the object of its earnest endeavours, it offended through Baal; i.e., not only through the introduction of

the worship of Baal in the time of Ahab (1 Kings 16:31ff.), but even through the establishment of the worship of the calves under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28), through which Jehovah was turned into a Baal. *וְיָמָת*, used of the state or kingdom, is equivalent to “was given up to destruction” (cf. Amos 2:2). The dying commenced with the introduction of the unlawful worship (cf. 1 Kings 12:30). From this sin Ephraim (the people of the ten tribes) did not desist: they still continue to sin, and make themselves molten images, etc., contrary to the express prohibition in Lev. 19:4 (cf. Ex. 20:4). These words are not merely to be understood as signifying, that they added other idolatrous images in Gilgal and Beersheba to the golden calves (Amos 8:14); but they also involve their obstinate adherence to the idolatrous worship introduced by Jeroboam (compare 2 Kings 17:16). *בְּתַבּוּנָם* from *תְּבִינָה*, with the feminine termination dropped on account of the suffix (according to Ewald, § 257, *d*; although in the note Ewald regards this formation as questionable, and doubts the correctness of the reading): “according to their understanding,” i.e., their proficiency in art.

The meaning of the second hemistich, which is very difficult, depends chiefly upon the view we take of *זֹבְחֵי אָדָם*, viz., whether we render these words “they who sacrifice men,” as the LXX, the fathers, and many of the rabbins and Christian expositors have done; or “the sacrificers of (among) men,” as Kimchi, Bochart, Ewald, and others do, after the analogy of *אֲבִיּוֹנֵי אָדָם* in Isa. 29:19. Apart from this, however, *zōbhchē ‘ādām* cannot possibly be taken as an independent sentence, such as “they sacrifice men,” or “human sacrificers are they,” unless with the LXX we change the participle *זֹבְחֵי* arbitrarily into the perfect *זָבְחוּ*. As the words read, they must be connected with what follows or with what precedes. But if we connect them with what follows, we fail to obtain any suitable thought, whether we render it “human sacrificers (those who sacrifice men) kiss calves,” or “the sacrificers among men kiss

calves.” The former is open to the objection that human sacrifices were not offered to the calves (i.e., to Jehovah, as worshipped under the symbol of a calf), but only to Moloch, and that the worshippers of Moloch did not kiss calves. The latter, “men who offer sacrifice kiss calves,” might indeed be understood in this sense, that the prophet intended thereby to denounce the great folly, that men should worship animals; but this does not suit the preceding words *הֵם* *אֲמָרִים*, and it is impossible to see in what sense they could be employed. There is no other course left, therefore, than to connect *zōbhchē ‘ādām* with what precedes, though not in the way proposed by Ewald, viz., “even to these do sacrificers of men say.” This rendering is open to the following objections: (1) that *הֵם* after *לָהֶם* would have to be taken as an emphatic repetition of the pronoun, and we cannot find any satisfactory ground for this; and, (2) what is still more important, the fact that *‘amar* would be used absolutely, in the sense of “they speak in prayer,” which, even apart from the “prayer,” cannot be sustained by any other analogous example. These difficulties vanish if we take *zōbhchē ‘ādām* as an explanatory apposition to *hēm*: “of them (the *‘atsabbīm*) they say, viz., the sacrificers from among men (i.e., men who sacrifice), Let them worship calves.” By the apposition *zōbhchē ‘ādām*, and the fact that the object *‘agālīm* is placed first, so that it stands in immediate contrast to *‘ādām*, the absurdity of men kissing calves, i.e., worshipping them with kisses (see at 1 Kings 19:18), is painted as it were before the eye.

**Hosea 13:3.** They prepare for themselves swift destruction in consequence. V. 3. *“Therefore will they be like the morning cloud, and like the dew that passes early away, as chaff blows away from the threshing-floor, and as smoke out of the window.”* *Lâkhên*, therefore, viz., because they would not let their irrational idolatry go, they would quickly perish. On the figures of the morning cloud and dew, see at Hosea 6:4. The figure of the chaff occurs more frequently (vid., Isa. 17:13; 41:15, 16; Ps. 1:4; 35:5, etc.). *יִסְעֶר* is

used relatively: which is stormed away, i.e., blown away from the threshing-floor by a violent wind. The threshing-floors were situated upon eminences (compare my *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. p. 114). "Smoke out of the window," i.e., smoke from the fire under a saucepan in the room, which passed out of the window-lattice, as the houses were without chimneys (see Ps. 68:3).

**Hosea 13:4.** "And yet I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt hither; and thou knowest no God beside me, and there is no helper beside me. V. 5. *I knew thee in the desert, in the land of burning heats.*" As in Hosea 12:10, a contrast is drawn here again between the idolatry of the people and the uninterrupted self-attestation of Jehovah to the faithless nation. From Egypt hither Israel has known no other God than Jehovah, i.e., has found no other God to be a helper and Saviour. Even in the desert He knew Israel, i.e., adopted it in love. יָדַע, to know, when applied to God, is an attestation of His love and care (compare Amos 3:2; Isa. 58:3, etc.). The ἀπ. λεγ. תִּלְאוּבַת, from לֵאב, Arab. *lâb, med. Vav*, to thirst, signifies burning heat, in which men famish with thirst (for the fact, compare Deut. 8:15).

**Hosea 13:6.** But prosperity made Israel proud, so that it forgot its God. V. 6. "As they had their pasture, they became full; they became full, and their heart was lifted up: therefore have they forgotten me." This reproof is taken almost word for word from Deut. 8:11ff. (cf. 31:20; 32:15ff.). בְּמִרְעִיתָם, answering to their pasture, i.e., because they had such good pasture in the land given them by the Lord. The very thing of which Moses warned the people in Deut. 8:11 has come to pass. Therefore are the threats of the law against the rebellious fulfilled upon them.

**Hosea 13:7.** "And I became like a lion to them; as a leopard by the wayside do I lie in wait. V. 8. *I fall upon them as a bear robbed of its young, and tear in pieces the enclosure of their heart, and eat them there like a lioness: the beast of the field will tear them in pieces.*" The figure of the

pasture which made Israel full (v. 6) is founded upon the comparison of Israel to a flock (cf. Hosea 4:16). The chastisement of the people is therefore represented as the tearing in pieces and devouring of the fattened flock by wild beasts. God appears as a lion, panther, etc., which fall upon them (cf. Hosea 5:14). וַיִּהְיֶה does not stand for the future, but is the preterite, giving the consequence of forgetting God. The punishment has already begun, and will still continue; we have therefore from אָשׁוּר

onwards imperfects or futures. אָשׁוּר, from שׁוּר, to look round, hence to lie in wait, as in Jer. 5:26. It is not to be changed into 'Asshur, as it is by the LXX and Vulgate. סְגוּר לְבָם, the enclosure of their heart, i.e., their breast. *Shâm* (there) points back to 'al-derekh (by the way).

**Hosea 13:9.** Ver. 9 commences a new strophe, in which the prophet once more discloses to the people the reason for their corruption (vv. 9–13); and after pointing to the saving omnipotence of the Lord (v. 14), holds up before them utter destruction as the just punishment for their guilt (v. 15 and Hosea 14:1). V. 9. "O Israel, it hurls thee into destruction, that thou (art) against me, thy help. V. 10. *Where is thy king? that he may help thee in all thy cities: and (where) they judges? of whom thou saidst, Give me king and princes!* V. 11. *I give thee kings in my anger, and take them away in my wrath.*" שְׁחַתָּה does not combine together the verbs in v. 8, as Hitzig supposes; nor does v. 9 give the reason for what precedes, but *shichethkhâ* is explained by v. 10, from which we may see that a new train of thought commences with v. 9. *Shichêth* does not mean to act corruptly here, as in Deut. 32:5; 9:12, and Ex. 32:7, but to bring into corruption, to ruin, as in Gen. 6:17; 9:15, Num. 32:15, etc. The sentence כִּי בִי וְגוֹי cannot be explained in any other way than by supplying the pronoun אֲתָה, as a subject taken from the suffix to שְׁחַתָּה (Marck, and nearly all the modern commentators). "This throws thee into distress, that thou hast resisted me, who am thy help."

בְּעִנְיָדָה: as in Deut. 33:26, except that ב is used in the sense of against, as in Gen. 16:12, 2 Sam. 24:17, etc. This opposition did not take place, however, when all Israel demanded a king of Samuel (1 Sam. 8:5). For although this desire is represented there (v. 7) as the rejection of Jehovah, Hosea is speaking here simply of the Israel of the ten tribes. The latter rebelled against Jehovah, when they fell away from the house of David, and made Jeroboam their king, and with contempt of Jehovah put their trust in the might of their kings of their own choosing (1 Kings 12:16ff.). But these kings could not afford them any true help. The question, "Where" ('ēhī only occurs here and twice in v. 14, for אִי or אֵי, possibly simply from a dialectical variation—*vid.* Ewald, § 104, *c*—and is strengthened by אִפְּוֹא, as in Job 17:15), "Where is thy king, that he may help thee?" does not presuppose that Israel had no king at all at that time, and that the kingdom was in a state of anarchy, but simply that it had no king who could save it, when the foe, the Assyrian, attacked it in all its cities. Before *shōphteykhâ* (thy judges) we must repeat 'ēhī (where). The *shōphtīm*, as the use of the word *sârīm* (princes) in its stead in the following clause clearly shows, are not simple judges, but royal counsellors and ministers, who managed the affairs of the kingdom along with the king, and superintended the administration of justice. The saying, "Give me a king and princes," reminds us very forcibly of the demand of the people in the time of Samuel; but they really refer simply to the desire of the ten tribes for a king of their own, which manifested itself in their dissatisfaction with the rule of the house of David, and their consequent secession, and to their persistence in this secession amidst all the subsequent changes of the government. We cannot therefore take the imperfects אִתָּן and אִתָּן in v. 11 as pure preterites, i.e., we cannot understand them as referring simply to the choice of Jeroboam as king, and to his death. The imperfects denote an action that is repeated again and again, for which we should

use the present, and refer to all the kings that the kingdom of the ten tribes had received and was receiving still, and to their removal. God in His wrath gives the sinful nation kings and takes them away, in order to punish the nation through its kings. This applies not merely to the kings who followed one another so rapidly through conspiracy and murder, although through these the kingdom was gradually broken up and its dissolution accelerated, but to the rulers of the ten tribes as a whole. God gave the tribes who were discontented with the theocratical government of David and Solomon a king of their own, that He might punish them for their resistance to His government, which came to light in the rebellion against Rehoboam. He suspended the division of the kingdom not only over Solomon, as a punishment for his idolatry, but also over the rebellious ten tribes, who, when they separated themselves from the royal house to which the promise had been given of everlasting duration, were also separated from the divinely appointed worship and altar, and given up into the power of their kings, who hurled one another from the throne; and God took away this government from them to chastise them for their sins, by giving them into the power of the heathen, and by driving them away from His face. It is to this last thought, that what follows is attached. The removal of the king in wrath would occur, because the sin of Ephraim was reserved for punishment.

**Hosea 13:12.** *"The guilt of Ephraim is bound together: his sin is preserved. V. 13. The pains of a travailing woman come upon him: he is an unwise son; that he does not place himself at the time in the breaking forth of children."* V. 12 is a special application of Deut. 32:34 to the ten tribes. *Tsârûr*, bound up in a bundle, like a thing which you wish to take great care of (compare Job 14:17; 1 Sam. 25:29). The same thing is applied in *tsâphûn*, hidden, carefully preserved, so as not to be lost (Job 21:19). "All their sins are preserved for punishment" (Chald.). Therefore will pains overtake Ephraim like a woman in labour. The pains of childbirth are not merely a figurative representation of

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violent agony, but of the sufferings and calamities connected with the refining judgments of God, by which new life was to be born, and a complete transformation of all things effected (cf. Mic. 4:9, 10; Isa. 13:8; 26:17; Matt. 24:8). He cannot be spared these pains, for he is a foolish son (cf. Deut. 32:6, 28ff.). But in what respect? This is explained in the words כִּי עַתּוֹ וּגְוֹרָה, "for at the time," or as עַתּוֹ cannot stand for לְעַתּוֹ, more correctly "when it is time," he does not place himself in, i.e., does not enter, the opening of the womb. *Mishbar bânîm* is to be explained as in 2 Kings 19:3 and Isa. 37:3; and עָמַד, c. ב as in Ezek. 22:30. If the child does not come to the opening at the right time, the birth is retarded, and the life of both mother and child endangered. The mother and child are one person here. And this explains the transition from the pains of the mother to the behaviour of the child at the time of birth. Ephraim is an unwise son, inasmuch as even under the chastening judgment he still delays his conversion, and will not let himself be new-born, like a child, that at the time of the labour-pains will not enter the opening of the womb and so come to the birth.

**Hosea 13:14.** But in order to preserve believers from despair, the Lord announces in v. 14 that He will nevertheless redeem His people from the power of death. V. 14. *"Out of the hand of hell will I redeem them; from death will I set them free! Where are thy plagues, O death? where thy destruction, O hell! Repentance is hidden from mine eyes."* The fact that this verse contains a promise, and not a threat, would hardly have been overlooked by so many commentators, if they had not been led, out of regard to vv. 13, 15, to put force upon the words, and either take the first clauses as interrogative, "Should I ... redeem?" (Calvin and others), or as conditional, "I would redeem them," with *"si resipiscerent"* (supplied (Kimchi, Sal. b. Mel. Ros., etc.)). But apart from the fact that the words supplied are perfectly arbitrary, with nothing at all to indicate them, both of these explanations are precluded by the sentences which follow: for the questions,

"Where are thy plagues, O death?" etc., are obviously meant to affirm the conquest or destruction of hell and death. And this argument retains its force even if we take אֲהִי as an optative from הִיָּה, without regard to v. 10, since the thought, "I should like to be thy plague, O death," presupposes that deliverance from the power of death is affirmed in what comes before. But, on account of the style of address, we cannot take אֲהִי even as an interrogative, in the sense of "Should I be," etc. And what would be the object of this gradation of thought, if the redemption from death were only hypothetical, or were represented as altogether questionable? If we take the words as they stand, therefore, it is evident that they affirm something more than deliverance when life is in danger, or preservation from death. To redeem or ransom from the hand (or power) of hell, i.e., of the underworld, the realm of death, is equivalent to depriving hell of its prey, not only by not suffering the living to die, but by bringing back to life those who have fallen victims to hell, i.e., to the region of the dead. The cessation or annihilation of death is expressed still more forcibly in the triumphant words: "Where are thy plagues (pestilences), O death? where thy destruction, O hell?" of which Theodoret has aptly observed, *παιανίζειν κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου κελύθει*. דְּבַרְךָ is an intensive plural of *debher*, plague, pestilence, and is to be explained in accordance with Ps. 91:6, where we also find the synonym קָטַב in the form קָטְבָה, pestilence or destruction. The Apostle Paul has therefore very properly quoted these words in 1 Cor. 15:55, in combination with the declaration in Isa. 25:8, "Death is swallowed up in victory," to confirm the truth, that at the resurrection of the last day, death will be annihilated, and that which is corruptible changed into immortality. We must not restrict the substance of this promise, however, to the ultimate issue of the redemption, in which it will receive its complete fulfilment. The suffixes attached to *'ephdēm* and *'eg'âlēm* point to Israel of the ten tribes, like the verbal suffixes in v. 8.

Consequently the promised redemption from death must stand in intimate connection with the threatened destruction of the kingdom of Israel. Moreover, the idea of the resurrection of the dead was by no means so clearly comprehended in Israel at that time, as that the prophet could point believers to it as a ground of consolation when the kingdom was destroyed. The only meaning that the promise had for the Israelites of the prophet's day, was that the Lord possessed the power even to redeem from death, and raise Israel from destruction into newness of life; just as Ezekiel (Ezek. 37) depicts the restoration of Israel as the giving of life to the dry bones that lay scattered about the field. The full and deeper meaning of these words was but gradually unfolded to believers under the Old Testament, and only attained complete and absolute certainty for all believers through the actual resurrection of Christ. But in order to anticipate all doubt as to this exceedingly great promise, the Lord adds, "repentance is hidden from mine eyes," i.e., my purpose of salvation will be irrevocably accomplished. The ἄπ. λεγ. *nōcham* does not mean "resentment" (Ewald), but, as a derivative of *nicham*, simply consolation or repentance. The former, which the Septuagint adopts, does not suit the context, which the latter alone does. The words are to be interpreted in accordance with Ps. 89:36 and Ps. 110:4, where the oath of God is still further strengthened by the words וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם, "and will not repent;" and וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם corresponds to אִם אֶכְזָב in Ps. 89:36 (Marck and Krabbe, *Quaestion. de Hosea vatic. spec.* p. 47). Compare 1 Sam. 15:29 and Num. 23:19.

**Hosea 13:15.** "For he will bear fruit among brethren. East wind will come, a wind of Jehovah, rising up from the desert; and his fountain will dry up, and his spring become dried. He plunders the treasures of all splendid vessels." The connection between the first clause and the previous verse has been correctly pointed out by Marck. "V. 15," he says, "adduces a reason to prove that the promised grace of redemption would certainly stand firm." כִּי cannot be either

a particle of time or of condition here (when, or if); for neither of them yields a suitable thought, since Ephraim neither was at that time, nor could become, fruit-bearing among brethren. Ewald's hypothetical view, "Should Ephraim be a fruitful child," cannot be grammatically sustained, since *kī* is only used in cases where a circumstance is assumed to be real. For one that is merely supposed to be possible, אִם is required, as the interchange of אִם and כִּי, in Num. 5:19, 20, for example, clearly shows. The meaning of יִפְרֵי־אֵל is placed beyond all doubt by the evident play upon the name *Ephraim*; and this also explains the writing with אִם instead of ה, as well as the idea of the sentence itself:

Ephraim will bear fruit among the brethren, i.e., the other tribes, as its name, double-fruitfulness, affirms (see at Gen. 41:52). This thought, through which the redemption from death set before Israel is confirmed, is founded not only upon the assumption that the name must become a truth, but chiefly upon the blessing which the patriarch promised to the tribe of Ephraim on the ground of its name, both in Gen. 48:4, 20, and Gen. 49:22ff. Because Ephraim possessed such a pledge of blessing in its very name, the Lord would not let it be overwhelmed for ever in the tempest that was bursting upon it. The same thing applies to the name Ephraim as to the name Israel, with which it is used as synonymous; and what is true of all the promises of God is true of this announcement also, viz., that they are only fulfilled in the case of those who adhere to the conditions under which they were given. Of Ephraim, those only will bear fruit which abides to everlasting life, who walk as true champions for God in the footsteps of faith and of their forefathers, wrestling for the blessing of the promises. On the other hand, upon the Ephraim that has turned into Canaan (Hosea 12:8) an east wind will come, a tempest bursting from the desert (see at Hosea 12:2), and that a stormy wind raised by Jehovah, which will dry up his spring, i.e., destroy not only the fruitful land with which God has blessed it (Deut.

33:13–16), but all the sources of its power and stability. Like the promise in v. 14, the threatening of the judgment, to which the kingdom of Israel is to succumb, is introduced quite abruptly with the word יָבוֹא. The figurative style of address then passes in the last clause into a literal threat. הוֹי, he, the hostile conqueror, sent as a tempestuous wind by the Lord, viz., the Assyrian, will plunder the treasure of all costly vessels, i.e., all the treasures and valuables of the kingdom. On *kli chemdâh* compare Nah. 2:10 and 2 Chron. 32:27. We understand by it chiefly the treasures of the capital, to which a serious catastrophe is more especially predicted in the next verse (Hosea 14:1), which also belongs to this strophe, on account of its rebellion against God.

**Hosea 13:16.** (Heb. Bibl. Hosea 14:1). *“Samaria will atone, because it has rebelled against its God: they will fall by the sword; their children will be dashed to pieces, and its women with child ripped up.”* אָשָׁם, to atone, to bear the guilt, i.e., the punishment. It is not equivalent to *shâmēm* in Ezek. 6:6, although, as a matter of fact, the expiation consisted in the conquest and devastation of Samaria by Shalmanezzer. The subject to *yipplū* (will fall) is the inhabitants of Samaria. The suffix to הָרִיחֵתוּ (its women, etc.) refers to the nation. The form הָרִיחֵתוּ is one derived from הָרָה, for הָרָה (Ewald, § 189, c). The construction with the masculine verb יִבְקְעוּ, in the place of the feminine, is an anomaly, which may be explained from the fact that feminine formations from the *plur. imperf.* are generally very rare (see Ewald, § 191, b). For the fact itself, compare Hosea 10:14; 2 Kings 8:12; 15:16; Amos 1:13.

## Hosea 14

### Israel’s Conversion and Pardon—Ch. 14

**Hosea 14.** After the prophet has set before the sinful nation in various ways its own guilt, and the punishment that awaits it, viz., the destruction of the kingdom, he concludes his

addresses with a call to thorough conversion to the Lord, and the promise that the Lord will bestow His grace once more upon those who turn to Him, and will bless them abundantly (vv. 1–8). V. 1. (Heb. Bib. v. 2). *“Return, O Israel, to Jehovah thy God; for thou hast stumbled through thy guilt. V. 2. Take with you words, and turn to Jehovah; say ye to Him, Forgive all guilt, and accept what is good, that we may offer our lips as bullocks. V. 3. Asshur will not help us: we will not ride upon horses, nor say ‘Our God’ any more to the manufacture of our own hands; for with Thee the orphan findeth compassion.”* There is no salvation for fallen man without return to God. It is therefore with a call to return to the Lord their God, that the prophet opens the announcement of the salvation with which the Lord will bless His people, whom He has brought to reflection by means of the judgment (cf. Deut. 4:30; 30:1ff.). שׁוּב עִדִּי, to return, to be converted to the Lord, denotes complete conversion; שׁוּב אֵל is, strictly speaking, simply to turn towards God, to direct heart and mind towards Him. By *kâshaltâ* sin is represented as a false step, which still leaves it possible to return; so that in a call to conversion it is very appropriately chosen. But if the conversion is to be of the right kind, it must begin with a prayer for the forgiveness of sin, and attest itself by the renunciation of earthly help and simple trust in the mercy of God. Israel is to draw near to God in this state of mind. *“Take with you words,”* i.e., do not appear before the Lord empty (Ex. 23:15; 34:20); but for this ye do not require outward sacrifices, but simply words, sc. those of confession of your guilt, as the Chaldee has correctly explained it. The correctness of this explanation is evident from the confession of sin which follows, with which they are to come before God. In כָּל־הַשָּׂא עֵזוֹ, the position of *col* at the head of the sentence may be accounted for from the emphasis that rests upon it, and the separation of *âvôn*, from the fact that *col* was beginning to acquire more of the force of an adjective, like our *all* (thus 2 Sam. 1:9; Job 27:3: cf. Ewald, § 289, a; Ges. § 114, 3, Anm. 1). *Qach*

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*tōbh* means neither “accept goodness,” i.e., let goodness be shown thee (Hitzig), nor “take it as good,” sc. that we pray (Grotius, Ros.); but in the closest connection with what proceeds: Accept the only good thing that we are able to bring, viz., the sacrifices of our lips. Jerome has given the correct interpretation, viz.: “For unless Thou hadst borne away our evil things, we could not possibly have the good thing which we offer Thee;” according to that which is written elsewhere (Ps. 37:27), “Turn from evil, and do good.” וְנִשְׁלַמָּה ... שְׂפָתֵינוּ, literally, “we will repay (pay) as young oxen our lips,” i.e., present the prayers of our lips as thank-offerings. The expression is to be explained from the fact that *shillēm*, to wipe off what is owing, to pay, is a technical term, applied to the sacrifice offered in fulfilment of a vow (Deut. 23:22; Ps. 22:26; 50:14, etc.), and that *pârîm*, young oxen, were the best animals for thank-offerings (Ex. 24:5). As such thank-offerings, i.e., in the place of the best animal sacrifices, they would offer their lips, i.e., their prayers, to God (cf. Ps. 51:17–19; 69:31, 32). In the Sept. rendering, ἀποδώσομεν καρπὸν χερίλων, to which there is an allusion in Heb. 13:15, פָּרִים has been confounded with פָּרִי, as Jerome has already observed. but turning to God requires renunciation of the world, of its power, and of all idolatry. Rebellious Israel placed its reliance upon Assyria and Egypt (Hosea 5:13; 7:11; 8:9). It will do this no longer. The riding upon horses refers partly to the military force of Egypt (Isa. 31:1), and partly to their own (Hosea 1:7; Isa. 2:7). For the expression, “neither will we say to the work of our hands,” compare Isa. 42:17; 44:17. אֲשֶׁר בָּךְ, not “Thou with whom,” but “for with Thee” (*‘āsher* as in Deut. 3:24). The thought, “with Thee the orphan findeth compassion,” as God promises in His word (Ex. 22:22; Deut. 10:18), serves not only as a reason for the resolution no longer to call the manufacture of their own hands God, but generally for the whole of the penitential prayer, which they are encouraged to offer by the compassionate nature of God. In response to such a penitential prayer, the Lord will heal

all His people’s wounds, and bestow upon them once more the fulness of the blessings of His grace. The prophet announces this in vv. 4–8 as the answer from the Lord.

**Hosea 14:4.** “I will heal their apostasy, will love them freely: for my wrath has turned away from it. V. 5. I will be like dew for Israel: it shall blossom like the lily, and strike its roots like Lebanon. V. 6. Its shoots shall go forth, and its splendour shall become like the olive-tree, and its smell like Lebanon. V. 7. They that dwell in its shadow shall give life to corn again; and shall blossom like the vine: whose glory is like the wine of Lebanon. V. 8. Ephraim: What have I further with the idols? I hear, and look upon him: I, like a bursting cypress, in me is thy fruit found.” The Lord promises first of all to heal their apostasy, i.e., all the injuries which have been inflicted by their apostasy from Him, and to love them with perfect spontaneity (*ndâbhâh* an adverbial accusative, *promta animi voluntate*), since His anger, which was kindled on account of its idolatry, had now turned away from it (*mimmennū*, i.e., from Israel). The reading *mimmenni* (from me), which the Babylonian Codices have after the Masora, appears to have originated in a misunderstanding of Jer. 2:35. This love of the Lord will manifest itself in abundant blessing. Jehovah will be to Israel a refreshing, enlivening dew (cf. Isa. 26:19), through which it will blossom splendidly, strike deep roots, and spread its shoots far and wide. “Like the lily:” the fragrant white lily, which is very common in Palestine, and grows without cultivation, and “which is unsurpassed in its fecundity, often producing fifty bulbs from a single root” (Pliny *h. n.* xxi. 5). “Strike roots like Lebanon,” i.e., not merely the deeply rooted forest of Lebanon, but the mountain itself, as one of the “foundations of the earth” (Mic. 6:2). The deeper the roots, the more the branches spread and cover themselves with splendid green foliage, like the evergreen and fruitful olive-tree (Jer. 11:16; Ps. 52:10). The smell is like Lebanon, which is rendered fragrant by its cedars and spices (Song of Sol. 4:11). The meaning of the several features in the picture has been well explained by Rosenmüller thus:



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“The *rooting* indicates stability: the *spreading of the branches*, propagation and the multitude of inhabitants; the *splendour of the olive*, beauty and glory, and that constant and lasting; the *fragrance*, hilarity and loveliness.” In v. 7 a somewhat different turn is given to the figure. The comparison of the growth and flourishing of Israel to the lily and to a tree, that strikes deep roots and spreads its green branches far and wide, passes imperceptibly into the idea that Israel is itself the tree beneath whose shade the members of the nation flourish with freshness and vigour. יְשׁוּבוּ is to be connected adverbially with יִחְיֶיךָ. Those who sit beneath the shade of Israel, the tree that is bursting into leaf, will revive corn, i.e., cause it to return to life, or produce it for nourishment, satiety, and strengthening. Yea, they themselves will sprout like the vine, whose remembrance is, i.e., which has a renown, like the wine of Lebanon, which has been celebrated from time immemorial (cf. Plin. *h. n.* xiv. 7; Oedmann, *Verbm. Sammlung aus der Naturkunde*, ii. p. 193; and Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Althk.* iv. 1, p. 217). The divine promise closes in v. 9 with an appeal to Israel to renounce idols altogether, and hold fast by the Lord alone as the source of its life. *Ephraim* is a vocative, and is followed immediately by what the Lord has to say to Ephraim, so that we may supply *memento* in thought. מַה־לִּי עוֹד לֵעַ, what have I yet to do with idols? (for this phrase, compare Jer. 2:18); that is to say, not “I have now to contend with thee on account of the idols (Schmieder), nor “do not place them by my side any more” (Ros.); but, “I will have nothing more to do with idols,” which also implies that Ephraim is to have nothing more to do with them. To this there is appended a notice of what God has done and will do for Israel, to which greater prominence is given by the emphatic אֲנִי: I, I hearken (*ânîthî* a prophetic perfect), and look upon him. שׁוּר, to look about for a person, to be anxious about

him, or care for him, as in Job 24:15. The suffix refers to Ephraim. In the last clause, God compares Himself to a cypress becoming green, not only to denote the shelter which He will afford to the people, but as the true tree of life, on which the nation finds its fruits—a fruit which nourishes and invigorates the spiritual life of the nation. The salvation which this promise sets before the people when they shall return to the Lord, is indeed depicted, according to the circumstances and peculiar views prevailing under the Old Testament, as earthly growth and prosperity; but its real nature is such, that it will receive a spiritual fulfilment in those Israelites alone who are brought to belief in Jesus Christ.

**Hosea 14:9.** Ver. 9 (10) contains the epilogue to the whole book. “*Who is wise, that he may understand this? understanding, that he may discern it? For the ways of Jehovah are straight, and the righteous walk therein: but the rebellious stumble in them.*” The pronoun אֲלֵהּ and the suffix to יִדְעֶם refer to everything that the prophet has laid before the people in his book for warning, for reproof, for correction, for chastening in righteousness. He concludes by summing up the whole substance of his teaching in the one general sentence, which points back to Deut. 32:4: The ways of the Lord are straight. “The ways of Jehovah” (*darkhē Yhōvâh*) are the ways taken by God in the guidance and government of men; not only the ways which He prescribes for them, but also His guidance of them. These ways lead some to life and others to death, according to the different attitudes which men assume towards God, as Moses announced to all the Israelites that they would (Deut. 30:19, 20), and as the Apostle Paul assured the church at Corinth that the gospel of Jesus also would (1 Cor. 1:18).