
הושע • HOSEA

INTRODUCTION

The *Book of Hosea* stands first in that part of the Latter Prophets called the Book of the Twelve, also known as the Minor Prophets because of the brevity of the books in comparison with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Hosea's ministry to the Northern Kingdom followed closely upon that of Amos. Whereas Amos had spoken as a southerner to a prosperous Israel enjoying an era of peace, Hosea spoke as a native to his own people, who were suffering from war with Assyria and in virtual anarchy. Four Israelite kings had been assassinated within fourteen years after the death of Jeroboam II. After the Assyrian conquest of 733–732 BCE, which resulted in the fall of Damascus, Samaria itself soon fell to the Assyrians (721 BCE).

Not all aspects of Hosea's life are clear. It can best be reconstructed, however, from the first three chapters, by observing the Hosea deals with Gomer as Yahweh deals with Israel; the prophet's personal life is an embodiment of God's redeeming love. Accordingly, the sensitive prophet, obedient to his call to take 'a wife of whoredom', married the prostitute, Gomer. She bore three children, of whom Hosea was presumably not the father (2:4–5) and then left him. Nevertheless, Hosea brought her back publicly (3:1–5) and took her again to himself.

The textual problems in *The Book of Hosea* are virtually unparalleled in the OT. The *Masoretic Text*, represented by the *Leningrad Codex* (circa 1008 CE), and the *Aleppo Codex* (circa 952 CE), are textually corrupt by all accounts and have a multitude of scribal errors. Many medieval MSS preserve textual variants that differ from the *MT*, as also does the *Qumran MS, 4QXII*; unfortunately, the latter is quite fragmentary (frequently in the very place that an important textual problem appears). The textual tradition and translation quality of the *Septuagint* and the early Greek recensions (*Aquila*, *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*) is mixed; in some places, they are inferior to the *MT* but in other places they preserve a better reading. In numerous cases, the *MT* readings are so difficult morphologically, syntactically, and contextually that conservative conjectural emendations are necessary to make sense of the text. Most major English translations adopt, either occasionally or frequently, textual variants reflected in the versions and occasionally adopt conservative conjectural emendations. However, many of the textual problems in Hosea are so difficult that the English translations frequently are split among themselves.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

Hosea prophesied circa 753–722 BCE and there is little or no reason to suppose that (the majority of) the text of the book was actually spoken by him. However, there are some clear signs of editing and the book in its current form probably dates from the Second Temple period. Chs 4–14 were written after the death of Jeroboam II. By the 2nd Century BCE, the 12 books of the Minor Prophets constituted a unit (see Si 49:10).

HOSEA 1

הושע פרק א

א דְּבַר־יְהוָה | אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־בְּאֵרִי בַיָּמֵי
 עֲזִיָּהוּ יוֹתָם אַחֲזוּ יְחִזְקִיָּה מְלָכֵי יְהוּדָה וּבַיָּמֵי יִרְבֵּעָם
 בֶּן־יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל: ב תַּחֲלַת דְּבַר־יְהוָה
 בְּהוֹשֵׁעַ {פ}

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הוֹשֵׁעַ לֵךְ קַח־לָךְ אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים
 וְיִלְדֵי זְנוּנִים כִּי־זֹנָה תִּזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה:
 ג וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־גֹּמֶר בִּת־דִּבְלַיִם וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד־לוֹ
 בֶּן: ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו קְרָא שְׁמוֹ יִזְרְעֵאל כִּי־עוֹד
 מְעַט וּפְקַדְתִּי אֶת־דְּמֵי יִזְרְעֵאל עַל־בֵּית יְהוּא
 וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מִמְּלָכוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: ה וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא
 וְשִׁבַרְתִּי אֶת־קֶשֶׁת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַמְק יִזְרְעֵאל: ו וַתַּהַר
 עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בַּת וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ קְרָא שְׁמָהּ לֹא רַחֲמָה כִּי
 לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד אֲרַחֵם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־נָשָׂא
 אִשָּׁא לָהֶם: ז וְאַת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֲרַחֵם וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּים

1 The word of Yahweh that came to Hosea son of Beeri in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel. 2 When Yahweh first spoke through Hosea:

Yahweh said to Hosea, “Go, marry a whore and get children with a whore; for, the land has become nothing but a whore by abandoning Yahweh. 3 So, he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, who conceived and bore him a son. 4 And Yahweh said to him, “Call him Jezreel; for, in a little while I shall punish the House of Jehu for the bloodshed at Jezreel and put an end to the kingdom of the House of Israel. 5 When that day comes, I shall break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.” 6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. And Yahweh said to him, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah; for, I shall show no more pity for the House of Israel; I shall never forgive them. 7 Instead, I shall take pity on the House of

HOSEA 1

- 1 Hosea also preached under Jeroboam II's (786–746 BCE) successors until the Northern Kingdom ended.
- 2 The literal translation of 'whore' is 'wife of prostitution'.
- 3 The literal translation of 'married' (וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח) is 'went and took'.
- 4 The names of Hosea's children are prophetic (see #Is 1:26). 'Jezreel' ('God sows', see 2:24–26) was one of the residences of the kings of Israel. There, Jehu massacred the wife and children of Ahab (2K 9:15–10:14). Unlike the author of 2K 10:30, Hosea condemns this action.
- 5 The 'Valley of Jezreel' and, in particular Megiddo, where the valley broadens out after leaving the coast, lay on the normal route between Egypt and Assyria, and was the principal battleground of the Holy Land (see Jg 4:12–16; 6:33, 1S 28:4, 2K 23:29).
- 6 An alternative translation for 'I shall never forgive them again' is 'I shall remove them completely'. 'Lo-Ruhamah' (לֹא רַחֲמָה) means 'Un-Pitied'.
- 7 This verse (parenthesised in the NJB) was probably added by disciples of Hosea who had taken refuge in Judah after the fall of Samaria, to suit the message to their adoptive homeland.

בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא אוֹשִׁיעִם בְּקִשָּׁת וּבַחֲרֹב
 וּבַמִּלְחָמָה בְּסוּסִים וּבַפָּרָשִׁים: ^ח וַתִּגְמַל אֶת־לֹא
 רַחֲמָה וַתֵּהָר וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר קָרָא שְׁמוֹ לֹא עַמִּי
 כִּי אַתֶּם לֹא עַמִּי וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם: {פ}

Judah and shall save them, not by bow or sword or force of arms, not by horses or horsemen, but by Yahweh their God.” ⁸ After weaning Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹ Yahweh said, “Call him Lo-Ammi; for, you are not my people and I do not exist for you.”

⁸ The preterite וַתִּגְמַל (literally, ‘and she weaned’) functions in a synchronic sense with the following preterite וַתֵּהָר (literally, ‘and she conceived’) and may be treated in translation as a dependent temporal clause.

⁹ ‘Lo-Ammi’ (לֹא עַמִּי) means ‘Not-My-People’; the three children are named in ascending order of Yahweh’s severity – with the last, Yahweh’s rejection is complete. The literal translation of ‘and I do not exist for you’ (the NRSV has ‘and I am not your God’) is ‘and I, not “I Am,” for you’ – an allusion to the meaning of Yahweh’s name (Ex 3:14). Hosea evidently understands the Divine Name to imply the protective and benevolent presence of the God of the Covenant.

הושע פרק ב

א וְהָיָה מִסַּפֵּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
יִמָּד וְלֹא יִסָּפֵר וְהָיָה בְּמִקְוֵם אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמַר לָהֶם לֹא־
עַמִּי אַתֶּם יֹאמַר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים: ב וְנִקְבְּצוּ בְנֵי־
יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יַחְדָּו וְשָׂמוּ לָהֶם רֹאשׁ אֶחָד
וְעָלוּ מִזֶּה־הָאָרֶץ כִּי גָדוֹל יוֹם יִזְרַעֵאל:

ג אָמְרוּ לְאֶחֱיֵיכֶם עַמִּי וּלְאֶחֻוֹתֵיכֶם רַחֲמָה:

ד רִיבוּ בְּאִמְכֶם רִיבוּ

כִּי־הִיא לֹא אִשְׁתִּי

וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אִישָׁהּ

וְתִסֶּר זְנוּנֶיהָ מִפְּנֵיהָ

וְנִאֲפֹפֶיהָ מִבֵּין שָׁדֶיהָ:

ה פֶּן־אֲפְשִׁיטְנָה עֲרֻמָּהּ

וְהִצַּגְתִּיהָ כִּיּוֹם הַיּוֹלְדָהּ

וְשִׁמְתִיהָ כַּמִּדְבָּר

וְשִׁתָּהּ כְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה

וְהִמַּתִּיהָ בְּצָמָא:

HOSEA 2

¹ Yet, the Israelites will be like the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place they were told, “You are not my people,” they will be told, “Children of the living God.” ² The Judaeans and Israelites will be united and will choose themselves one head and will spread far beyond their land; for, great will be the Day of Jezreel!

³ Then call your brothers ‘Ammi’, and your sisters ‘Ruhamah’.

⁴ To court, take your mother to court!

For, she is no longer my wife

nor am I her husband.

She must either remove her whoring ways from her face
and her adulteries from between her breasts,

⁵ or I shall strip her and expose her,
naked as the day she was born.

I shall make her as bare as the desert;

I shall make her as dry as an arid country,
and let her die of thirst.

HOSEA 2

¹ Vv. 1-2 are included in the NRSV as 1:10-11; here, we follow the MT (and NJB).

² The sense of ‘spread far beyond’ is not clear (the NRSV has ‘take possession of’). Others understand ‘overrun’ or ‘come from’ (their countries of exile).

³ These are new symbolic names: ‘Ammi’/עַמִּי = ‘My People’, ‘Ruhamah’/רַחֲמָה = ‘You have been Pitied’. ‘Your brothers’ (אַחֵיכֶם) and ‘your sisters’ (אַחֻוֹתֵיכֶם) represent Judah and Israel.

⁴ The ‘whoring ways’ and ‘adulteries’ can be understood as the amulets, tattoos, and other signs distinctive of the prostitute (see Gn 38:15, Pr 7:10).

⁵ In the 3rd line, there is a transition from the wife to the country: the agricultural wealth of Canaan, which has seduced Israel into worshipping Baal (10:1, 13:6) is to be suppressed (4:3, 5:7, 9:6, 13:15).

<p>וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהָ לֹא אֲרַחֵם כִּי־בָנֵי זְנוּנִים הֵמָּה: כִּי זָנְתָה אִמָּם הַבִּישָׁה הוֹרְתָם כִּי אָמְרָה אֵלֶכָּה אַחֲרַי מֵאֲהָבִי נִתְּנִי לַחֲמִי וּמִיָּמִי צִמְרֵי וּפְשָׁתַי שִׁמְנֵי וְשִׁקּוּיֵי: לְכֵן הִנְנִי־שֹׁדֵד אֶת־דַּרְכֶּךָ בְּסִירִים וְגִדְדֹתַי אֶת־גְּדֹרְךָ וּנְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ לֹא תִמְצָא: וְרִדְפָה אֶת־מֵאֲהָבֶיהָ וְלֹא־תִשְׁיֵג אֹתָם וּבְקִשְׁתָּם וְלֹא תִמְצָא וְאָמְרָה אֵלֶכָּה וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֶל־אִישֵׁי הָרֵאשׁוֹן כִּי טוֹב לִי אִזּוֹ מֵעַתָּה: וְהָיָא לֹא יִדְעָה כִּי אֲנֹכִי נִתְּתִי לָהּ הַדָּגָן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְהַיֵּצֶהָר וְכֶסֶף הַרְבִּיתִי לָהּ וְזָהָב עָשׂוּ לְבַעַל:</p>	<p>ו ז ח ט י</p>	<p>6 I shall feel no pity for her children since they are children of her whoredom. 7 Yes, their mother has played the whore, she who conceived them has disgraced herself by saying, “I shall chase after my lovers; they will assure me my keep, my wool, my flax, my oil and my drinks.” 8 This is why I shall block her way with thorns, and wall her in to stop her in her tracks. 9 Then, if she chases her lovers, she will not catch them; if she looks for them, she will not find them, and then she will say, “I shall go back to my first husband; I was better off then than I am now.” 10 She had never realised before that I was the one who was giving her the grain, new wine, and oil, giving her more and more silver and gold, which they have spent on Baal!</p>
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6 The word order of the 1st line is rhetorical: the accusative וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהָ (*‘her children’*) is thrown forward.
7 The *‘lovers’* represent the various fertility gods of Canaan, local manifestations of Baal (vv. 15, 19).
8 *‘Her way’* follows the LXX (ὁδὸν αὐτῆς) and Peshitta; the MT has *‘your way’*.
9 In the MT, the accusative direct object pronoun אֹתָם (*‘them’*) is elided for balanced poetic parallelism; the LXX supplies αὐτούς but it is not necessary to emend the MT because this is a poetic literary convention, not a textual problem.
10 The 3PL in the last line refers to the Israelites; to maintain the imagery of Israel as the prostitute, some (e.g. NIV) supply a 3FS pronoun.

יא לְכֵן אָשׁוּב וְלִקְחָתִי דְגָנִי בְעֵתוֹ
 וְתִירוֹשֵׁי בְמוֹעֵדוֹ
 וְהִצַּלְתִּי צִמְרִי וּפְשֵׁתִי
 לְכִסּוֹת אֶת־עֲרוֹתָהּ:
 יב וְעַתָּה אֲגַלֶּה אֶת־נִבְלָתָהּ לְעֵינֵי מְאֵהָבֶיהָ
 וְאִישׁ לֹא־יִצְלִיֶנָּה מִיָּדַי:
 יג וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי כָל־מְשׁוֹשֵׂהָ
 חֲגֵה חֲדָשָׁה וְשַׁבָּתָהּ
 וְכָל מוֹעֵדָהּ:
 יד וְהִשְׁמַתִּי גִפְנֵהָ וְתֵאֲנִתָּהּ
 אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָה אֶתְנָה הִמָּה לִּי
 אֲשֶׁר נָתַנּוּ־לִי מְאֵהָבֵי
 וְשִׁמְתִים לִיעֵר
 וְאֶכְלָתֶם חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה:
 טו וּפְקַדְתִּי עָלֶיהָ
 אֶת־יָמֵי הַבְּעָלִים אֲשֶׁר תִּקְטִיר לָהֶם

- 11 This is why I shall take back my grain when it is due and my new wine, when the season for it comes. I shall withdraw my wool and my flax, which were to cover her naked body.
- 12 Soon I shall display her infamy before her lovers' eyes – no one will take her from me then!
- 13 I shall put an end to all her merrymaking, her festivals, her New Moons and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.
- 14 I shall make her vines and fig trees derelict of which she used to say, "These are the pay my lovers gave me." I shall turn them into a jungle: wild animals will feed on them.
- 15 I mean to make her pay for the feast-days on which she burnt incense to the Baals,

11 The literal translation of 'I shall take back' (אָשׁוּב וְלִקְחָתִי) is 'I will return and I will take'; the two verbs joined with *vav* conjunction form a verbal hendiadys in which the first verb functions adverbially and the second retains its full verbal sense.

12 The particle עַתָּה ('soon') often refers to the imminent or the impending future; in Hosea, it normally introduces imminent judgment (4:16, 5:7, 8:8, 13, 10:2). The literal translation of 'infamy' (here following the NJB) is 'lewdness', and that of 'from me' is 'out of my hands'.

13 In place of 'solemn feasts' (here following the NJB), the NRSV & NETB have 'appointed festivals'.

14 'Vines and fig trees' are traditional symbols for the peace and comfort characteristic of the reign of Solomon (1K 5:5) and the Messianic Age (Mi 4:4, Zc 3:10).

15 'Incense' was peculiarly associated with pagan worship (Jr 44:8, 17). The accusative direct object pronoun וְאֶתִּי ('me') in the last line is emphatic in the word order of the clause, emphasising the heinous inappropriateness of Israel's departure from Yahweh.

וַתַּעַד נְזַמָּה וְחָלִיתָהּ
 וַתִּלְךְ אַחֲרֵי מְאֵהָבֶיהָ
 וְאֶתִי שָׁכַחָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
 לְכֵן הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִפְתִּיחָהּ טו
 וְהִלְכֹתֶיהָ הַמִּדְבָּר
 וְדַבַּרְתִּי עַל־לִבָּהּ:
 וְנָתַתִּי לָהּ אֶת־כַּרְמֶיהָ מִשָּׁם ז
 וְאֶת־עֵמֶק עֶכוֹר לִפְתַּח תְּקוּוּהָ
 וְעֲנֹתָהּ שָׁמָּה כִּימֵי נְעוּרֶיהָ
 וּכְיוֹם עֲלוֹתָהּ מֵאֶרֶץ־מִצְרָיִם:

when she tricked herself out in her earrings and necklaces
 to chase after her lovers,
 and forget me – says Yahweh.

16 But look, I am going to seduce her,
 and lead her into the desert
 and speak to her heart.

17 There, I shall give her back her vineyards,
 and make the Vale of Achor a gateway of hope.
 There, she will respond as when she was young,
 as on the day when she came up from Egypt.

י"ח וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה תִּקְרָאִי אִישִׁי וְלֹא־
 תִּקְרָאִי־לִי עוֹד בְּעַלְי: ט"ו וְהִסְרֹתִי אֶת־שְׁמוֹת
 הַבְּעֻלִים מִפִּיהָ וְלֹא־יִזְכְּרוּ עוֹד בְּשֵׁמָם: כ' וְכִרְתִּי
 לָהֶם בְּרִית בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עִם־חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה וְעִם־עוֹף
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וְרִמְשׁ הָאָדָמָה וְקִשְׁת׃ וְחָרַב וּמִלְחָמָה

18 On that day – declares Yahweh – you will call me, ‘My husband’; no
 more will you call me, ‘My Baal’. 19 I shall banish the names of the Baals
 from her lips and their names will be mentioned no more. 20 On that
 day, I shall make a treaty for them with the wild animals, with the birds
 of heaven and the creeping things of the earth; I shall break the bow, the

16 The word here translated as ‘seduce’ (the NRSV has ‘allure’) is a strong one (מִפְתִּיחָהּ), meaning to seduce someone from the course that he ought to have followed (cf. Jg 14:15). The same word is used of a man who seduces a virgin (Ex 22:15).

17 The ‘Vale of Achor’ is a valley near Jericho giving access to the interior of the country and traditionally the scene of an act of disloyalty severely punished by Yahweh (Jos 7:24–26). The name means ‘valley of misfortune’, according to Jos 7:26.

18 In place of ‘you will call’, here following the MT (תִּקְרָאִי) and NJB, the LXX (καλέσει), Vg (vocabit) and Peshitta have ‘she will call’, reflecting תִּקְרָאִי, the variant undoubtedly arising from תִּקְרָאִי־לִי (‘will you call’), which follows. The name ‘Baal’ (בְּעַל – master) was also used of husbands. From ancient times, it had formed an element in many proper names (see 1S 14:49, 2S 2:8, 1Ch 8:33, 9:39–40) without any idolatrous significance, Yahweh being the ‘master’ to whom the bearer of the name was thus dedicated.

19 The singular term בְּעַל (‘Baal’, v. 18) refers to the Canaanite god Baal himself, while the plural form הַבְּעֻלִים (‘Baals’) refers to idols of him.

20 Once the faithless country comes to its senses, Yahweh will show that he and not Baal is the true provider and protector of Israel.

אֶשְׂבֹר מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁכַּבְתִּים לְבֶטַח:
כא וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בְצַדִּיק
 וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים: **כב** וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי
 בְּאַמוּנָה וַיִּדְעַתְּ אֶת־יְהוָה: {פ}

כג וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶעֱנֶה
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה

אֶעֱנֶה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְהֵם יַעֲנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

כד וְהָאָרֶץ תַּעֲנֶה

אֶת־הַדָּגָן וְאֶת־הַתִּירוֹשׁ וְאֶת־הַיִּצְהָר
 וְהֵם יַעֲנוּ אֶת־יִזְרְעֵאל:

כה וַיִּזְרַעְתִּיהָ לִי בְּאָרֶץ

וְרַחֲמֵתִי אֶת־לֹא רַחֲמָה
 וְאַמְרָתִי לְלֹא־עַמִּי־אֲתָהּ
 וְהוּא יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי: {פ}

sword and warfare, and banish them from the country, and I will let them sleep secure. ²¹ I shall betroth you to myself forever; I shall betroth you in uprightness and justice, and faithful love and tenderness. ²² Yes, I shall betroth you to myself in loyalty and in the knowledge of Yahweh.

²³ On that day, I shall respond,
 says Yahweh;

I shall respond to the heavens
 and they will respond to the earth.

²⁴ The earth will respond to the grain,
 the new wine and oil,
 and they will respond to Jezreel.

²⁵ I shall sow her in the country to be mine,
 I shall take pity on Lo-Ruhamah,
 I shall tell Lo-Ammi, “You are my people,”
 and he will say, “You are my God.”

²¹ The verb here translated as ‘betroth’ is used in the Bible only with reference to a young virgin.

²² For Hosea, ‘knowledge of Yahweh’ and love go together; in wisdom literature, ‘knowledge’ and ‘wisdom’ are practically synonymous.

²³ The verb ענה (*respon*), which is used throughout vv. 23–24, means ‘answer’, ‘listen attentively’, or ‘react willingly’.

²⁴ God will respond to the waiting creations and creation will respond to what people, in accordance with God’s plan, expect from it; this reverses the present condition of disorder due to sin (see 4:3, Gn 3:17ff, Is 11:6, Rm 8:19). The use of the name ‘Jezreel’ (יִזְרְעֵאל) creates a powerful three-fold wordplay: **1** The proper name is a phonetic wordplay on the similar sounding name יִשְׂרָאֵל (*Israel*) – God will answer Israel, that is, Jezreel; **2** The name plays on the immediately following word: וַיִּזְרַעְתִּיהָ (*vav* + Qal perfect 1CS + 3FS suffix = ‘I will sow her’) – this wordplay creates a popular etymology for the name, meaning, ‘God sows/plants’, which fits well into the agricultural fertility imagery in 2:23–25; **3** This positive connotation of the name reverses the negative connotation in 1:4–5 (bloodshed of Jehu in the Jezreel Valley).

²⁵ ‘I shall sow’ is a play on the meaning of Jezreel (see #1:5). The ominous names are abolished by the mutual love of God and his people.

הושע פרק ג

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי עוֹד לְךָ אֶהֱבֵא אִשָּׁה אֲהַבְתָּ רַע
וּמְנַאֲפֶת כְּאֲהַבְתָּ יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהֵם פְּנִים
אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְאֶהְבֵּי אֲשֵׁישֵׁי עֲנָבִים:
ב וְאֶכְרָה לִּי בַחֲמֹשֶׁה עֶשֶׂר בְּסֹף וְחָמֵר שְׁעָרִים
וְלִתְדֵי שְׁעָרִים: ג וְאָמַר אֵלַיָּה יָמִים רַבִּים תִּשְׁבֵּי לִּי
לֹא תִזְנִי וְלֹא תִהְיִי לְאִישׁ וְגַם־אֲנִי אֶלְיָךְ: ד כִּי יָמִים
רַבִּים יֵשְׁבוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין מֶלֶךְ וְאֵין שָׂר וְאֵין זָבַח
וְאֵין מִצִּבָּה וְאֵין אֶפֹּד וְתַרְפִּים: ה אַחֲרַי יֵשְׁבוּ בְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְקִשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵת דָּוִד
מֶלְכָם וּפְחָדוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וְאֶל־טוֹבוֹ בְּאַחֲרֵית
הַיָּמִים: {פ}

HOSEA 3

¹ Yahweh said to me, "Go, love a woman who loves another man, an adulteress, and love her as Yahweh loves the Israelites although they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes." ² So, I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver, a homer of barley and a skin of wine, ³ and I said to her, "You will have to wait a long time for me without playing the whore and without giving yourself to any man, and I will behave in the same way towards you." ⁴ For, the Israelites will have to spend a long time without king or leader, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim; ⁵ but, after that, the Israelites will return and again seek Yahweh their God, and David their king, and turn trembling to Yahweh for his bounty in the final days.

HOSEA 3

- ¹ 'Who loves' follows the LXX (*ἀγαπᾶσα*) and Peshitta (different vowel pointing); the MT has 'loved by' (אֲהַבְתָּ). This is surely Gomer again, whom Hosea loved and still loves, but who continues to be unfaithful to him; the generosity of the prophet towards disloyalty is the symbol of the unflagging love of Yahweh for his people. An alternative reading for the end is, "...or other gods who love raisin-cakes." (See Dn 14:5-8.)
- ² Hosea redeems Gomer from her master or from the sanctuary where she has become a sacred prostitute. The total price is about that for the redemption of a slave (Ex 21:32, Lv 27:4). 'A homer of barley and a skin of wine' follows the LXX (*γόμερ κριθῶν καὶ νεβελ οἴνου*); the MT has 'seven bushels of barley': one 'homer' is about 450 litres; 'fifteen shekels' is about 165g.
- ³ This verse describes a period of trial (as v. 4 explains) before the covenant is renewed between Yahweh and Israel (cf. 2:8-9, 16).
- ⁴ In place of 'teraphim' (תַּרְפִּים), here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'domestic images'. During the period of corrective punishment, Israel will be deprived of civil and ceremonial institutions.
- ⁵ The phrase, 'and David their king' is almost certainly a Judaeen addition (see #1:7, and cf. Jr 30:9, Ezk 34:23).

הושע פרק ד

שִׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל א
כִּי רִיב לִיהוָה עַם־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ
כִּי אֵין־אֱמֶת וְאֵין־חֶסֶד
וְאֵין־דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ:
אֱלֹהִים וְכַחֲשׁ ב
וְרָצַח וְגִנֵּב וְנָאֵף
פָּרְצוּ וְדָמִים בְּדָמִים נִגְעוּ:
עַל־כֵּן | תֵּאָבֵל הָאָרֶץ ג
וְאִמְלֵל כָּל־יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ
בְּחַיַּת הַשָּׁדָה וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְגַם־דָּגֵי הַיָּם יֵאָסְפוּ:
אֶךְ אִישׁ אֶל־יָרֵב וְאֶל־יֹכֵחַ אִישׁ ד
וְעַמְּךָ כַּמְרִיבֵי כְהֵן:
וְכִשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם ה

HOSEA 4

- 1 Israelites, hear what Yahweh says;
for, Yahweh has an indictment against the citizens of the land:
there is no loyalty, no faithful love,
and no knowledge of God in the country.
- 2 Perjury and lying, murder, theft,
adultery and violence break out,
bloodshed after bloodshed.
- 3 This is why the country is in mourning
and all its citizens pining away,
also the wild animals and birds of the sky,
even the fish in the sea will disappear.
- 4 Yet, let no one denounce, no one rebuke;
it is you that I denounce, O priest.
- 5 You shall stumble in broad daylight,

HOSEA 4

- 1 The noun רִיב ('indictment', or 'dispute', 'lawsuit') in Hosea refers to a covenant lawsuit in which Yahweh the suzerain lodges a legal case against his disobedient vassal, accusing Israel and Judah of breach of covenant which will elicit the covenant curses.
- 2 The term פָּרְצוּ refers to violent and wicked actions; here, it is used figuratively to describe breaking moral barriers and restraints.
- 3 Hosea contrasts the situation as it is with the ideal situation of the renewed people (2:21–25); there is neither sincerity, nor love, nor knowledge of God (v. 1, cf. 2:21ff). Instead of harmony between person and environment (2:20,23ff), there are corruption and death (4:3, cf. 2:24).
- 4 The 2nd line has been emended (וְעַמְּךָ רִיבֵי כְהֵן) – and following the NRSV & NJB); the MT has, "And your people [are] like those who contend against the priest," which is reflected in the LXX (ὁ δὲ λαός μου ὡς ἀντιλεγόμενος ἱερεὺς) & Peshitta but this it is awkward and makes no sense.
- 5 NETB emends the 3rd line to, "you have destroyed your own people" (וְדָמִיתִי עַמְּךָ): the 2MS form 'you have destroyed' is preserved in several mediaeval Hebrew MSS and is reflected in the Vg (*nocte tacere feci matrem tuam*).

וְכָשַׁל גַּם־נְבִיא עִמָּךָ לַיְלָה וְדָמִיתִי אִמְךָ: נִדְמּוּ עַמִּי מִבְּלִי הַדַּעַת כִּי־אַתָּה הַדַּעַת מֵאִסַּת וְאִמְאִסַּדְךָ וְאִמְאִסַּדְךָ מִבְּהֵן לִי וְתִשְׁכַּח תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשַׁכַּח בְּנִיךָ גַם־אֲנִי: כָּרְבָם כֵּן חֲטָאוּ־לִי כְּבוֹדָם בְּקִלּוֹן אָמִיר: חֲטָאת עַמִּי יֹאכְלוּ וְאֶל־עוֹנָם יִשְׂאוּ נַפְשׁוֹ: וְהָיָה כְּעַם כְּבִהֵן וּפְקַדְתִּי עָלָיו דַּרְכָּיו וּמֵעַלְלָיו אֲשִׁיב לוֹ: וְאֹכְלוּ וְלֹא יִשְׂבְּעוּ הִזְנוּ וְלֹא יִפְרְצוּ כִּי־אַתָּה־יְהוָה עֲזָבוּ	ו ז ח ט י	and the prophet will stumble with you in the dark, and I will make your mother perish. 6 My people perish for want of knowledge. Since you yourself have rejected knowledge, so I shall reject you from my priesthood; since you have forgotten the teaching of your God, I in my turn shall forget your children. 7 The more of them there have been, the more they have sinned against me; they have bartered their Glory for Shame. 8 They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity. 9 As with the people, so with the priest: I shall punish them for their conduct, I shall pay them back for their deeds. 10 They will eat but never be satisfied; they will play the whore but not grow more prolific, since they have deserted Yahweh
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⁶ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁷ 'They have bartered their Glory (i.e. Yahweh) for Shame (i.e. the Baals)' follows the Tg and Peshitta (and NJB); the MT has 'I will change their glory into shame' and the NRSV, following an ancient Hebrew tradition, has 'they changed their glory into shame' (substituting אָהֲמִירוֹ for אָמִיר).

⁸ The priest received a substantial part of the victim offered at sin sacrifices (Lv 6:19-22) and at expiation sacrifices (Lv 7:7).

⁹ Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "And it shall be, like people, like priest."

¹⁰ The 2nd line probably refers to the sacred prostitution of the Canaanite cults.

לְשֹׁמֵר: יֵא זָנוֹת
 וַיִּזְנוּ וְתִירוֹשׁ יִקְח־לֵב:
 עֲמַל בְּעֵצוֹ יִשְׁאַל ^ב
 וּמִקְלוֹ יִגִּיד לוֹ
 כִּי רוּחַ זָנוּנִים הִתְעָה
 וַיִּזְנוּ מִתַּחַת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
 עַל־רָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים יִזְבְּחוּ ^ג
 וְעַל־הַגְּבְעוֹת יִקְטְרוּ
 תַּחַת אֶלֶז וְלִבְנֶה וְאֵלֶּה
 כִּי טוֹב צֶלֶה
 עַל־כֵּן תִּזְנֶינָה בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם
 וְכָלוֹתֵיכֶם תִּנְאַפְּנָה:
 לֹא־אֶפְקֹד עַל־בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִזְנֶינָה ^ד
 וְעַל־כָּלוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִנְאַפְּנָה
 כִּי־הֵם עִם־הַזָּנוֹת יִפְרְדּוּ
 וְעִם־הַקְּדֻשׁוֹת יִזְבְּחוּ וְעַם
 לֹא־יָבִין יִלְבֹּט:
 אִם־זֹנֶה אַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל ^ט
 אֲל־יֵאָשֶׁם יְהוּדָה

to give themselves up ¹¹ to whoring.

Old wine and new wine addle my people's wits.

¹² They consult their block of wood

and their stick explains what they should do.

For, an urge to go whoring has led them astray
and whoring they go and desert their God.

¹³ They offer sacrifice on the mountaintops,

they burn incense on the hills,

under oak, poplar, and terebinth,

for pleasant is their shade.

Therefore, your daughters play the whore

and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

¹⁴ I shall not punish your daughters for playing the whore

or your daughters-in-law for committing adultery,

when the men themselves are wandering off with whores

and offering sacrifice with sacred prostitutes,

for a people with no understanding is doomed.

¹⁵ Though you, Israel, play the whore,

there is no need for Judah to sin too.

¹¹ The 2nd line is a reproach to Israel for having an insensitive religious attitude in their desire for a good harvest (cf. 7:14).

¹² The 'block' and 'stick' allude to divination with the help of wooden objects.

¹³ This verse references high-place sanctuaries and their sacred trees (Jr 2:20).

¹⁴ The women's guilt is less since they are given a bad example by their husbands and fathers.

¹⁵ 'Beth-Aven' (בֵּית אָוֶן) - 'house of sin' is an insulting nickname for Bethel ('house of God').

וְאַל־תִּבְּאוּ הַגִּלְגָּל וְאַל־תַּעֲלוּ בֵּית אֲוֶן

וְאַל־תִּשְׁבַּעוּ חַי־יְהוָה:

טז כִּי כָפְרָה סִרְיָה סָרָר יִשְׂרָאֵל

עֲתָה יִרְעַם יְהוָה

כְּכֶבֶשׂ בַּמֶּרְחֶב:

יז חֲבוֹר עֲצָבִים אֶפְרַיִם הִנְחִילוּ:

יח סָר סְבָאִים

הַזֵּנָה הַזֵּנוּ

אָהָבוּ הִבּוּ קִלּוֹן מִגְּנִיָּה:

יט צָרָר רוּחַ אוֹתָהּ בְּכַנְפֶיהָ

וַיִּבְשׂוּ מִזְבְּחוֹתָם: {פ}

Do not go to Gilgal, do not go up to Beth-Aven,
and do not swear oaths by Yahweh's life.

16 For, Israel has rebelled like a stubborn heifer;

so, is Yahweh likely to pasture him

like a lamb in a broad meadow?

17 Ephraim has made a pact with idols – let him alone!

18 Their drunken orgy over,

they do nothing but play the whore,

preferring Shame to their Pride.

19 The wind with its wings will carry them off

and their sacrifices will bring them nothing but disgrace.

¹⁶ The verb סָרָר ('has rebelled') can also mean 'has been stubborn'; this is the same root (סִרְיָה) used in the simile: 'like a stubborn heifer'. The similarity between Israel and a stubborn heifer is emphasised by the repetition of the same term.

¹⁷ In place of 'let him alone' (here following the NJB & NRSV), NETB has 'do not go near him'.

¹⁸ 'Pride' (i.e. Yahweh) is a conjectural translation following the NJB – by vowel rearrangement of 'shields' (as in the MT); the NRSV, following the LXX (φρουράγματος – literally, 'neighing'), has 'Glory' (cf. v. 7).

¹⁹ 'Their sacrifices' (זְבָחוֹתָם) refers to Israel's apostate idolatrous Baal worship.

הושע פרק ה

א שְׁמְעוּ-זאת הכהנים והקשׁיבו |
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבֵית הַמֶּלֶךְ הָאֲזִינוּ
כִּי לָכֶם הַמִּשְׁפָּט
כִּי-פַח הָיִיתֶם לַמִּצְפָּה
וּרְשֵׁת פְּרוּשָׁה עַל-תְּבֹר:
ב וּשְׁחָטָה שְׁטִים הָעַמִּיקוּ
וְאֲנִי מוֹסֵר לְכֻלָּם:
ג אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם
וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-נִכְחַד מִמֶּנִּי
כִּי עַתָּה הִזְנִיתָ אֶפְרַיִם
נְטָמָא יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ד לֹא יִתְּנוּ מַעַלְלֵיהֶם לָשׁוּב אֶל-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
כִּי רוּחַ זְנוּנִים בְּקִרְבָּם

HOSEA 5

- 1 Hear this, you priests,
listen, House of Israel,
pay attention, royal House!
For, it is you who have justice in your care,
but you have been a snare at Mizpah
and a net outspread on Tabor.
- 2 They have dug the ditch deep at Shittim
and so I am going to punish them all.
- 3 Ephraim have I known,
Israel is not hidden from me;
and yet, Ephraim, you have played the whore,
Israel is defiled.
- 4 Their deeds do not allow them to return to their God,
since an urge to play the whore possesses them

HOSEA 5

- 1 Several places named 'Tabor' (תְּבֹר) are mentioned in the Bible and it is difficult to know which is meant here (possibly Mount Tabor, cf. Dt 33:19, Jg 4:6). 'Mizpah' (מִצְפָּה) – either in Transjordan (Jg 10:17) or north of Jerusalem (1S 7:5) – was probably a cult-place whose ministers had led the people astray by encouraging idolatry. An alternative translation for the 4th line is 'for sentence has been passed against you' (the NRSV has 'for the judgement pertains to you') but compare the parallel of Mi 3:1.
- 2 The meaning of the 1st line is uncertain: the MT reads 'and rebels have made deep the slaughter'; here, we emend to וּשְׁחָטָה הַשְׁטִים הָעַמִּיקוּ: this involves: (a) phonological confusion between the similar sounding consonants ת and ט, (b) re-division of words to take ה as the article with the 2nd word, rather than a feminine noun ending of the 1st, and (c) re-vocalisation of the (modified) 2nd word.
- 3 An alternative translation of the last line (here following the NRSV – the NJB has 'befouled' rather than 'defiled') is 'Israel has become corrupt'.
- 4 The spirit of whoredom is so confirmed within them that they cannot return to their God.

וְאֶת־יְהוָה לֹא יִדְעוּ:
 וְעֵנָה גְאוֹן־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָנָיו ה
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶפְרַיִם יִכְשְׁלוּ בְעֵוֹנָם
 כְּשֵׁל גַּם־יְהוּדָה עִמָּם:
 בְּצֹאֲנִים וּבְבָקָרָם ו
 יֵלְכוּ לִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה
 וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּ חֵלֶץ מֵהֶם:
 בִּיהוָה בְּגָדוֹ ז
 כִּי־בָנִים זָרִים יֵלְדוּ
 עַתָּה יֹאכְלֵם חֹדֶשׁ אֶת־חֲלָקֵיהֶם: {ס}
 תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּגִבְעָה ח
 חֲצֹצְרָה בְרָמָה
 הֲרִיעוּ בַּיֵּת אֲוֹן
 אַחֲרֵיךָ בְּנִימִין:

and they no longer know Yahweh.

- 5 Israel's arrogance is his accuser,
 Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their guilt;
 Judah too will be undone with them.
- 6 Though, with their sheep and cattle,
 they go in search of Yahweh,
 they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them.
- 7 They have betrayed Yahweh
 because they have fathered bastards;
 now, the new moon will devour them and their fields.
- 8 Sound the horn in Gibeah,
 the trumpet in Ramah,
 raise the war cry in Beth-Aven,
 "We are behind you, Benjamin!"

⁵ The verb יִכְשְׁלוּ (*'will stumble'*) is used figuratively to describe distress (Is 59:10, Ps 107:12), the debilitating effects of misfortune and calamity (Is 5:27), and toil in exile (Lm 5:13); it is often used figuratively to describe the overthrow of a people or nation through divine judgment (Is 8:15, Jr 6:21, 50:32, Ho 4:5, 5:5, 14:2). The Niphal stem used here is also frequently used in reference to divine judgment: *'be overthrown'* (as *NJB*), of nations, armies (Jr 6:15, 8:12, Dn 11:19, 33–34, 41). The repetition of כְּשֵׁל in the 3rd line emphasises that a similar fate will befall Judah because it failed to learn its lesson from God's judgment on Israel; the verb does not describe the moral stumbling of Judah, but the effect of God's judgment (Is 8:15, Jr 6:21, 50:32, Ho 4:5; 5:5, 14:2), and the toil of exile (Lm 5:13).

⁶ The terms *'sheep'* and *'cattle'* are used figuratively for animal sacrifices: Hosea describes the futility of seeking God's favour with mere ritual sacrifice without the prerequisite moral obedience (e.g. 1S 15:24, Ps 50:6–8, 51:17–18, Is 1:12, Mi 6:6–8). Contrast this verse with Jr 29:13.

⁷ The meaning of the last line is either that the feast-day is turned into a day of punishment or it is a warning to mark its imminence; the particle עַתָּה (*'now'*) often refers to the impending future; in Hosea, it normally introduces imminent judgment (2:12, 4:16, 5:7, 8:8, 13; 10:2).

⁸ The word translated as *'look behind you'* (אַחֲרֵיךָ) is uncertain (here following the *NJB*); perhaps it should be corrected according to the context to read *'tremble in fear'* (הִתְרַדוּ), as reflected in the *LXX* (ἐξέσθη).

<p>אֶפְרַיִם לְשִׁמָּה תִּהְיֶה בַּיּוֹם תּוֹכַחַה בְּשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הוֹדַעְתִּי נֶאֱמָנָה: הַיּוֹ שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה כַּמְסִיגֵי גְבוּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֶשְׁפּוֹךְ כַּמַּיִם עַבְרָתִי: עָשׂוּק אֶפְרַיִם רְצוּץ מִשִּׁפְט כִּי הוֹאִיל הִלְךְ אַחֲרֵי־צוֹ: וְאֲנִי כָעֵשׂ לְאֶפְרַיִם וְכִרְקַב לְבַיִת יְהוּדָה: וַיֵּרָא אֶפְרַיִם אֶת־חֻלְיוֹ וַיהוּדָה אֶת־מְזוֹרוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶפְרַיִם אֶל־אַשּׁוּר וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יָרָב וְהוּא לֹא יוֹכֵל לְרַפֵּא לָכֶם</p>	<p>ט י יא יב יג</p>	<p>9 When the day of punishment comes, Ephraim will be a wasteland; on the tribes of Israel, I have pronounced certain doom. 10 The rulers of Judah act like men who move the boundary stone; I shall pour my wrath out on them like a flood. 11 Ephraim is oppressed, crushed by the sentence, for having deliberately followed a lie. 12 Because of this, I shall be like ringworm for Ephraim and like rotteness for the House of Judah. 13 Once Ephraim realised that he was sick and Judah that he had an ulcer, Ephraim then went to Assyria – he sent messengers to the Great King; but he has no power to cure you</p>
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⁹ The ‘*certain doom*’ is the Exile: the destruction of the kingdom (2K 15:29), the fall of Samaria, and the loss of Israel’s independence (2K 17:5–6).
¹⁰ The first line alludes to the advance of the Judaeen army into Israelite territory and perhaps also to earlier encroachments by Judah (1K 15:16–22). The “Deuteronomic Code” (Dt 19:14, 27:17) condemns those who displace boundary marks. The boundaries of the tribal territories in the Holy Land were considered to be established on God’s own instructions (Jos 13:6ff).
¹¹ The 1st line here follows the MT but the implications are not clear. The LXX reads, “Ephraim is an oppressor, he tramples on justice” (κατεδυνάστευσεν Εφραιμ τὸν ἀντιδικὸν αὐτοῦ, κατεπάτησεν κρίμα), referring to the alliance with Damascus and the invasion of the related kingdom of Judah in the Syro-Ephraimite War. ‘A lie’ is conjectural (following the NJB – the NRSV has ‘vanity’); the MT (וַצ) is unintelligible.
¹² The noun רִקְב (‘rotteness’) refers to wood rot caused by the ravages of worms.
¹³ ‘To the Great King’ (אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יָרָב) is a conjectural translation, preserving an archaic genitive construct, as also in 10:6; the MT has ‘to an avenging king’ (אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יָרָב). This may be a reference to the pro-Assyrian kings of Israel: Menahem, who paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III in 738 BCE and Pekahiah, who followed the same policy, and to Ahaz of Judah, who appealed for help to the same Assyrian king in 735 BCE (2K 16:7–9).

וְלֹא־יִגְהַה מִכֶּם מְזֹר:
כִּי אֲנֹכִי כְשֹׁחַל לְאַפְרַיִם יד
וְכִכְפִּיר לְבֵית יְהוּדָה
אֲנִי אֲנִי אֶטְרֹף וְאֶלֶךְ
אֲשָׂא וְאִין מִצִּיל:
טו
אֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּבָה אֶל־מְקוֹמִי
עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִאֲשָׁמוּ וּבִקְשׁוּ פָנַי
בְּצָר לָהֶם יִשְׁחַרְנְנִי:

or to heal you of your sore.

- 14 For, I shall be like a lion to Ephraim,
like a young lion to the House of Judah;
I myself shall tear them, then go my way,
shall carry them off, beyond hope of rescue.
- 15 I shall go back to my place
until they confess their guilt and seek me,
seek me eagerly in their distress.

¹⁴ In place of 'tear', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'rend' and NETB has 'tear ... to pieces'.

¹⁵ An alternative reading for 'until they confess' is 'until they have atoned for'.

הושע פרק ו

א לְכוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה אֶל־יְהוָה
כִּי הוּא טָרַף
וַיִּרְפָּאֵנוּ יָד וַיַּחְבֹּשׁנוּ:
ב יַחֲיֵנוּ מִיָּמִים
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
יִקְמְנוּ וְנַחֲיָה לְפָנָיו:
ג וְנִדְעָה נִרְדָּפָה לְדַעַת אֶת־יְהוָה
כְּשֶׁחַר נִכּוֹן מִצָּאוֹ
וַיָּבֹא כַּגֶּשֶׁם לָנוּ
כְּמַלְקוֹשׁ יוֹרֵה אֲרָץ:
ד מָה אֲעִשֶׂה־לָּךְ אֶפְרַיִם
מָה אֲעִשֶׂה־לָּךְ יְהוּדָה
וַחֲסִדְכֶם כַּעֲנַן־בֹּקֶר
וּכְטַל מְשָׁכִים הַלֵּךְ:
ה עַל־כֵּן חָצַבְתִּי בַּנְּבִיאִים

HOSEA 6

- 1 Come, let us return to Yahweh.
He has rent us and he will heal us:
he has struck us and he will bind up our wounds.
- 2 After two days, he will revive us,
on the third day, he will raise us up
and we shall live in his presence.
- 3 Let us know, let us strive to know Yahweh;
that he will come is certain as the dawn.
He will come to us like a shower,
like the rain of springtime to the earth.
- 4 What am I to do with you, Ephraim?
What am I to do with you, Judah?
For, your love is like morning mist,
like the dew that quickly disappears.
- 5 This is why I have cut them to pieces by means of the prophets,

HOSEA 6

- 1 The people, frightened by the threat of punishment and abandonment by Yahweh (5:14-15) call for a return to him (vv. 1-3); however, the return is ephemeral and devoid of inner conversion (vv. 4-6).
- 2 The expression 'after two days ... on the third day' (see #Am 1:3) means a short lapse of time.
- 3 The literal translation of 'let us strive' (נִרְדָּפָה) is 'let us pursue'; it describes the pursuit of a moral goal: "Do not pervert justice ... nor accept a bribe ... pursue justice" (Dt 16:20); "those who pursue righteousness and who seek Yahweh" (Is 51:1); "He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honour" (Pr 21:20); "Seek peace and pursue it" (Ps 34:15); "they slander me when I pursue good" (Ps 38:21).
- 4 The Hebrew poets and prophets frequently refer to the morning clouds (or 'mist') as a simile for transitory feelings (13:3, Job 7:9, Is 44:22).
- 5 The 3rd line follows the LXX (*καὶ τὸ κρίμα μου ὡς φῶς*), Peshitta & Tg, repointing the MT, which has 'your judgements, a light comes forth'.

הַרְגָתִים בְּאִמְרֵי־פִי		why I have killed them with words from my mouth,
וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ אֹר יֵצֵא:		why my sentence will blaze forth like the dawn.
כִּי חֶסֶד חִפְצָתִי וְלֹא־זֶבַח	ו	6 For, faithful love is what pleases me, not sacrifice;
וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מַעֲלֹת:		knowledge of God, not burnt offerings.
וְהֵמָּה כְּאָדָם עִבְרוּ בְרִית	ז	7 However, they have broken the covenant at Adam,
שֵׁם בְּגָדוּ בִי:		there they have betrayed me.
גִּלְעָד קְרִית פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן	ח	8 Gilead is a city of evildoers,
עֵקֶבָה מַדָּם:		full of bloody footprints.
וּכְחֹלֵי אִישׁ גְּדוּדִים חֶבֶר פְּהֲגִים	ט	9 Like so many robbers in ambush,
דָּרָךְ יִרְצְחוּ־שִׁכְמָה		a gang of priests commits murder on the road to Shechem –
כִּי זָמָה עָשׂוּ:		what infamous behaviour!
בְּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאִיתִי שַׁעֲרִירִיה שַׁעֲרוּרִיה	י	10 In the House of Israel, I have seen a horrible thing;
שֵׁם זְנוּת לְאֶפְרַיִם		there, Ephraim plays the whore,
נִטְמָא יִשְׂרָאֵל:		Israel is befouled.
גַּם־יְהוּדָה שֶׁת קָצִיר לָךְ	יא	11 For you too, Judah, a harvest is in store,
בְּשׁוּבֵי שָׁבוֹת עַמִּי: {פ}		when I restore my people's fortunes.

6 This verse is quoted by Jesus in Mt 9:13 & 12:7.

7 'At Adam' is a conjectural translation (בְּאָדָם – assuming orthographic confusion); the MT has 'like a man' (כְּאָדָם). The allusion is enigmatic: perhaps there was an idolatrous sanctuary at Adam (near the mouth of the Jabbok).

8 'Gilead' was on a plateau of the same name in Transjordan.

9 The meaning of the word here translated as 'in ambush' (the NRSV has 'lie in wait') is uncertain.

10 In place of 'in the house of Israel', following the MT (בְּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל) and NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural translation 'at Bethel'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

11 In the MT, the 2nd line is included in 6:11 but some feel it belongs with 7:1. The LXX, Peshitta & Vg all reflect the MT division.

הושע פרק ז

א כִּרְפָאֵי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
וּנְגִלָה עִוֹן אֶפְרַיִם
וּרְעוֹת שְׁמֵרוֹן
כִּי פָעִלוּ שֶׁקֶר
וּגְנֵב יָבֹא
פָּשַׁט גְּדוּד בַּחוּץ:
ב וּבִלְיָאֲמָרוּ לְלִבָּם
כָּל־רַעְתָּם זָכַרְתִּי
עַתָּה סִבְבוּם מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם
נִגְדַּד פְּנֵי הַיּוֹ:
ג בְּרַעְתָּם יִשְׁמַחוּ־מִלְךָ
וּבִכְחֹשֵׁיהֶם שָׂרִים:
ד כָּל־מְנַאֲפִים
כָּמוֹ תִנּוֹר בַּעֲרָה מֵאֵפֶה
יִשְׁבּוֹת מֵעִיר מְלוּשׁ בִּצֶק עַד־חֲמֻצָתוֹ:
ה יוֹם מִלְּפָנָיו
הִחֲלוּ שָׂרִים חֲמַת מִיַּיִן

HOSEA 7

- 1 Whenever I would heal Israel,
I am confronted by the guilt of Ephraim
and the evil-doings of Samaria;
for, deceit is their principle of behaviour;
the thief breaks into the house,
marauders raid in the open.
- 2 They never pause to consider
that I remember all their wicked deeds;
and now, their own deeds hem them in
and stare me in the face.
- 3 They amuse the king with their wickedness
and the chief men with their lies.
- 4 They are all adulterers,
hot as an oven that the baker need not stoke,
from the time he has kneaded the dough until it rises.
- 5 At the holiday for our king,
the ministers become inflamed with wine,

HOSEA 7

- 1 'Into the house' follows the LXX (*πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰσελεύσεται* – literally 'to him shall enter'); the phrase is not present in the MT.
- 2 The literal translation of the first line is 'and they do not say in their heart'.
- 3 The prophet here draws a picture of a conspiracy in which the traitors, after feigning loyalty, assassinate the king and chief men, as they lie drunk after a night of revelling. Elah died thus (1K 16:9-10).
- 4 In place of 'adulterers' (מְנַאֲפִים), here following the MT, NJB and NRSV, NETB has 'bakers' (אֹפִים).
- 5 The 'holiday' was an annual celebration in the king's honour. In place of 'our king' (מִלְּפָנָיו), some suggest 'their king' (מִלְּכָם), following the Tg.

מִשָּׁד יְדוֹ אֶת־לִצְצִים: ^ו כִּי־קָרְבוּ כַתְנֹור
 לִבָּם בְּאַרְבֵּם
 כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה יִשָּׁן אִפְהֵם
 בֶּקֶר הוּא בַעַר כְּאֵשׁ לְהִבֶּה:
 כָּלֶם יַחְמוּ כַתְנֹור ^ז
 וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־שֹׁפְטֵיהֶם
 כָּל־מַלְכֵיהֶם נָפְלוּ
 אִין־קָרָא בְהֶם אֵלַי:
 אֶפְרַיִם בְּעַמִּים הוּא יִתְבּוֹלֵל ^ח
 אֶפְרַיִם הִיָּה עֵגֶה בְּלֵי הַפּוֹכָה:
 אָכְלוּ זָרִים כֹּחוֹ ^ט
 וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע
 גַּם־שִׁיבָה זָרְקָה
 בּוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע:
 וְעֵנָה גְאוֹן־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּפָּנִי ^י
 וְלֹא־שָׁבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
 וְלֹא בִקְשׂוּהוּ בְכָל־זֹאת:
 וַיְהִי אֶפְרַיִם כִּיּוֹנֵה פוֹתָה אִין לֵב ^{יא}

while he accepts the homage of people ⁶ who laugh at him.

Their hearts are like an oven as they plot;
all night their passion slumbers,
then, in the morning, it bursts into flame.

⁷ Yes, all of them as hot as ovens,
they consume their rulers.

All their kings have fallen thus,
not one of them has ever called on me.

⁸ Ephraim mixes with the nations.
Ephraim is a half-baked cake.

⁹ Foreigners have eaten his strength away
but he is unconscious of it;
even his hair is turning grey
but he is unconscious of it.

¹⁰ Israel's arrogance is his own his accuser;
but they do not come back to Yahweh their God
or seek him, despite all this.

¹¹ Ephraim is like a silly, witless pigeon

⁶ 'Their passion' is a conjectural translation (אִפְהֵם); the MT has 'their baker' (אֶפְהֵם).

⁷ The words 'thus' and 'ever', here following the NJB, are not in the MT and are added for clarity and style.

⁸ The literal translation of 'half-baked cake' is 'cake not turned' - i.e. useless, because burnt on one side and underdone on the other.

⁹ For 'strength', following the MT, LXX (ἰσχυρῶς), NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'what his strenuous labour produced'; there is no textual support for this.

¹⁰ The NJB places this entire verse in parentheses.

¹¹ The literal translation of 'silly' is 'allowing itself to be seduced' (the same word as in 2:16), here yielding to the seduction of foreign alliance.

מְצָרִים קָרְאוּ אֲשׁוּר הִלְכוּ:
כַּאֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ אֶפְרוֹשׁ עֲלֵיהֶם רֶשֶׁתִּי יב
כְּעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם אוֹרִידֵם
אִיסִירֵם כְּשִׁמְעַתֶּם: {ס}
אֹי לָהֶם כִּי־נִדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי יג
שֹׁד לָהֶם כִּי־פָשְׁעוּ בִּי
וְאֲנֹכִי אֶפְדֶּם
וְהֵמָּה דִבְרוּ עָלַי כְּזָבִים:
וְלֹא־זָעְקוּ אֵלַי בְּלִבָּם יד
כִּי יִלְלוּ עַל־מִשְׁכַּבֹּתֵם
עַל־דָּגָן וְתִירוֹשׁ יִתְגֹרְרוּ
יִסְּרוּ בִּי:
וְאֲנִי יִסְרֹתִי חֲזָקָתִי זְרוּעֹתַי טו
וְאֵלַי יִחְשְׁבוּ־רָע:
יִשׁוּבוּן לֹא עַל טז
הֵיוּ בְּקֶשֶׁת רְמִיָּה

calling on Egypt, turning to Assyria.
12 Wherever they turn, I shall spread my net over them,
I shall bring them down like the birds of the sky,
and I shall punish them for their perversity.
13 Woe to them for having fled from me!
Let ruin seize them for having wronged me!
I would redeem them
but they have only told lies about me.
14 Theirs is no heartfelt cry to me
when they lament on their beds;
when they gash themselves over the grain and new wine,
they are still rebelling against me.
15 Though I supported and gave strength to their arms,
they plan how to hurt me.
16 They turn to what does not exist;
they are like a faulty bow.

12 Alternative readings for 'wherever' are 'however often' or 'even if'. 'For their perversity' follows the LXX (ἀλίψεως αὐτῶν) and NJB; the MT (כְּשִׁמְעַתֶּם) and NRSV have 'according to the report made to their assembly'. The NJB drops כְּשִׁמְעַתֶּם ('according to hearsay'), suggesting an alternative, "when I hear they have assembled," the comparison with birds thus continuing to the end of the verse.

13 For the 3rd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'I have rescued them again and again'.

14 'They gash themselves' follows the LXX (κατετέμνοντο); the MT has 'they live as strangers' (יִתְגֹרְרוּ). On these ritual mutilations, see 1K 18:28, Jr 16:6, 41:5. 'They are rebelling' is conjectural (יִסְּרוּ); the MT has 'they turn away' (יִסְּרוּ).

15 For the 3rd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads 'yet they plot evil against me'.

16 'What does not exist' follows the LXX (οὐθέν) and NJB; the MT is uncertain ('they turn but not above'), the NRSV has 'which does not profit', NASB has 'they turn, but not upward' and NETB has 'they turn to Baal'.

יִפְּלוּ בַחֶרֶב שָׂרֵיהֶם מִזַּעַם לְשׁוֹנָם
זוֹ לַעֲגָם
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Their leaders will fall by the sword
because of their arrogant talk;
how they will be laughed at in Egypt!

הושע פרק ז

אֶל-חֶכֶדְךָ שֹׁפֵר א
כַּנְשֵׁר עַל-בַּיִת יְהוָה
יַעַן עֲבָרוּ בְרִיתִי
וְעַל-תּוֹרָתִי פָשְׁעוּ:
לִי יִזְעֻקוּ ב
אֱלֹהֵי יִדְעֻנּוּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
זָנַח יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹב ג
אוֹיֵב יִרְדְּפוּ:
הֵם הַמְלִיכּוֹ וְלֹא מִמְּנִי ד
הַשִּׁירוּ וְלֹא יִדְעֵתִי
כַּסְפָּם וְזָהָבָם
עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֲצָבִים
לְמַעַן יִכָּרֶת:
זָנַח עֲגֻלְךָ שִׁמְרוֹן ה
חָרָה אִפִּי בָם
עַד-מָתִי לֹא יוֹכְלוּ נִקְיוֹן:

HOSEA 8

- 1 Put the trumpet to your lips!
Like an eagle, *disaster is swooping* on Yahweh's home,
because they have violated my Covenant
and been unfaithful to my Law.
- 2 Will they cry,
"My God, we, Israel, you know!"
- 3 Israel has rejected the good;
the enemy will pursue them.
- 4 They have set up kings, but without my consent,
and appointed princes, without my knowledge.
With their silver and gold,
they have made themselves idols,
but only to be destroyed.
- 5 I spurn your calf, Samaria!
My anger blazes against them!
How long will it be before they recover their innocence?

HOSEA 8

- 1 'Disaster is swooping' (following the NJB) has been added for clarity. The 'eagle' (נִשְׁפָּר) the NRSV has 'vulture' – the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain) is a symbol of disaster (see Jr 48:40, 49:22). 'Yahweh's home' is here not the Temple but the Holy Land, Yahweh's property (cf. 9:15).
- 2 The NJB adds 'in vain' at the beginning of this verse and before 'we'; here, we follow the MT.
- 3 The 'enemy' here is Assyria.
- 4 Hosea is condemning the anarchy of the kingdom in which rulers were assassinated and replaced without regard to religious considerations.
- 5 'I spurn your calf' is a conjectural translation following the NJB; the MT has 'he spurns your calf' and the NRSV has 'your calf is rejected'.

<p>כִּי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהוּא חֲרָשׁ עָשָׂהוּ וְלֹא אֱלֹהִים הוּא כִּי־שִׁבְבִים יִהְיֶה עֲגֹל שִׁמְרוֹן: כִּי רוּחַ יִזְרְעוּ וְסוּפָתָה יִקְצְרוּ קִמָּה אֵין־לוֹ צֶמַח בְּלִי יַעֲשֶׂה־קֶמַח אוּלַי יַעֲשֶׂה זָרִים יִבְלַעְהוּ: נִבְלַע יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲתָה הֵיוּ בַגּוֹיִם כְּכֹלֵי אֵין־חֶפֶץ בּוֹ: כִּי־הִמָּה עָלוּ אַשּׁוּר פָּרָא בּוֹדֵד לוֹ אֶפְרַיִם הִתְנַו אֲהָבִים: גַּם כִּי־יִתְנּוּ בַגּוֹיִם עֲתָה אֶקְבְּצֵם וַיַּחֲלוּ מִעֵט</p>	<p>ו 6 For, it is the product of Israel – a craftsman made the thing: it is no god at all! The calf of Samaria will be broken into pieces!</p> <p>ז 7 Since they sow the wind, they will reap the whirlwind; stalk without ear will never yield flour – or, if it does, foreigners will swallow it.</p> <p>ח 8 Israel has himself been swallowed; now, they are lost among the nations like something no one wants.</p> <p>ט 9 For, they have approached Assyria – like a wild donkey, all alone. Ephraim has rented lovers.</p> <p>י 10 Because they bargain with the nations, I am now going to round them up; soon, they will writhe</p>
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6 This attack on idols is followed by many others in the prophetic books (see #Is 40:20 & #Is 41:21).

7 For the 3rd line, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'the standing grain has no heads'.

8 Vv. 8–10 seem to be later than the deportation of 734 BCE (2K 15:29). The alternation of singular and plural pronouns is a poetic device.

9 'Rented lovers' is an allusion to the tribute paid to the kings of Assyria (5:13, 7:11) and possibly also gifts sent to Egypt (12:2).

10 The 'king of princes' refers to the king of Assyria.

מִמֶּשֶׁא מֶלֶךְ שָׂרִים:
א כִּי־הִרְבֵּה אֲפָרִים מִזְבְּחֹת לַחֹטָא
הֵיוּ־לּוֹ מִזְבְּחֹת לַחֹטָא:
ב אַכְתּוּב אֶכְתָּב־לּוֹ רַבּוֹ רַבִּי תּוֹרָתִי
כְּמוֹ־זֶר נִחְשָׁבוּ:
ג זָבַחַי הִבְהִי יִזְבְּחוּ בָשָׂר וַיֹּאכְלוּ
יְהוֹה לֹא רָצָם
עֲתָה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם
וַיִּפְקֹד חַטֹּאתֵם
הֵמָּה מִצְרַיִם יָשׁוּבוּ:
ד וַיִּשְׁכַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עֲשֵׂהוּ
וַיִּבְנוּ הַיְכָלוֹת וַיהוּדָה
הִרְבֵּה עָרִים בְּצֻרוֹת
וַשְּׁלַחְתִּי־אֵשׁ בְּעָרָיו
וַאֲכָלָה אֶרְמֹנֵיהֶּ: {פ}

under the weight of the king of princes!

11 Ephraim keeps building altars for sin offerings,
but these very altars are themselves a sin.

12 However much of my Law I write for him,
Ephraim regards it as alien to him.

13 They offer sacrifices to me and eat the meat;
they do not win Yahweh's favour.

On the contrary, he will remember their guilt
and punish their sins;
they will have to go back to Egypt.

14 Israel has forgotten his Maker
and has built palaces,
while Judah keeps on building fortified towns;
but I shall send fire down on his cities
to devour their citadels.

11 In place of 'sin offerings', here following NETB, the NJB has 'his sins'.

12 The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

13 The 1st line is an uncertain translation of a difficult, possibly corrupt, text.

14 NETB adds 'royal' before both 'palaces' (2nd line) and 'citadels' (last line); here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV. The LXX has 'sacred precincts' (τεμένη) in place of 'palaces' and 'foundations' (θεμέλια) in place of 'citadels'.

הושע פרק ט

א אֶל־תִּשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל |
אֶל־גִּיל כְּעַמִּים
כִּי זָנִיתָ מֵעַל אֱלֹהֶיךָ
אֶהְבֵּת אֶתְנֹן עַל כָּל־גְּרָנוֹת דָּגָן:
ב גָּרֵן וַיִּקֶּב לֹא יִרְעֶם
וְתִירוֹשׁ יִכְחַשׁ בָּהּ:
ג לֹא יִשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוָה
וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם
וּבְאֲשׁוּר טָמְאָ יֹאכְלוּ:
ד לֹא־יִסְכּוּ לַיהוָה | יַיִן
וְלֹא יַעֲרְבוּ־לוֹ
זְבַחֵיהֶם כָּלֶחֶם אוֹנִים לָהֶם
כָּל־אֲכָלִיו יִטְמָאוּ
כִּי־לֶחֶם לְנַפְשָׁם
לֹא יָבֹא בֵּית יְהוָה:
ה מִה־תַּעֲשׂוּ לַיּוֹם מוֹעֵד
וּלְיוֹם חַג־יְהוָה:

HOSEA 9

- 1 No merrymaking for you, Israel,
no rejoicing like other peoples;
for, you have deserted your God to play the whore,
you have loved the fee of prostitution on the threshing-floor.
- 2 The threshing-floor and winepress will not feed them;
and the new wine will fail them.
- 3 No more will they live in Yahweh's country;
Ephraim will have to go back to Egypt
and eat polluted food in Assyria.
- 4 No more will they pour libations of wine to Yahweh,
and their sacrifices will not win his favour
but will be like funeral fare for them:
whoever eats them will be polluted;
for, their food will be for themselves alone,
not being offered in Yahweh's home.
- 5 What will you do on the solemn feast-day,
on the day of Yahweh's festival?

HOSEA 9

¹ 'No rejoicing' follows the LXX (*μηδὲ εὐφραίνου*); the MT has 'towards rejoicing'.

² 'Them' follows the LXX (*αὐτούς*), Tg and Peshitta; the MT has 'her'.

³ Foreign countries are polluted by virtue of the idols in them (see 1S 26:19, Am 7:17).

⁴ Food prepared or eaten in the presence of the dead was considered polluted.

⁵ The 'festival' is that of the Harvest, or Feast of Shelters, which could not be celebrated in exile.

<p>כִּי־הִנֵּה הִלְכוּ מִשָּׂדֶה מִצְרַיִם תִּקְבְּצֵם מִן תְּקַבְּרֵם מִחֲמַד לְכַסְפֵּם קָמוּשׁ יִרְשֵׁם חוּחַ בְּאֶהְלִיֵּהם: בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַפְּקֻדָּה בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַשְּׁלֵם יִדְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲוִיל הַנְּבִיא מִשְׁגַּע אִישׁ הַרוּחַ עַל רֹב עֲוֹנָיִךְ וְרַבָּה מִשְׁטָמָה: צִפָּה אֶפְרַיִם עַם־אֱלֹהֵי נְבִיא פֶחַ יְקוֹשׁ עַל־כָּל־דַּרְכָּיו מִשְׁטָמָה בְּבֵית אֱלֹהָיו: הָעַמִּיקוּ שְׁחַתּוֹ כִּי־מֵי הַגְּבֵעָה יִזְכּוֹר עֲוֹנֵם יִפְקֹד חַטָּאוֹתֵם: {ס}</p>	<p>ו</p> <p>ז</p> <p>ח</p> <p>ט</p>	<p>6 What a scene of devastation they have left! Egypt will round them up, Memphis will bury them, nettles will inherit their fields and thorn bushes invade their homesteads.</p> <p>7 The days of punishment have come, the days of retribution are here; Israel knows it! "The prophet is mad and the inspired man a fool!" Great has been your guilt - all the greater, then, the hostility!</p> <p>8 The watchman of Ephraim is with my God: it is the prophet - and a fowler's trap is placed on all his paths; and, in the shrine of his God, there is enmity towards him.</p> <p>9 They have become deeply corrupt as in the days of Gibeah; he will remember their guilt and he will punish their sins.</p>
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⁶ In place of 'fields' (following the NJB), the NRSV has 'precious things of silver'; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

⁷ Vv. 7-8 are very obscure and the translation is largely conjectural (here following the NJB). For the 3rd line, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV has 'Israel cries' (following the Old Greek), while the LXX has 'and Israel shall be afflicted' (καὶ κακωθήσεται Ἰσραηλ).

⁸ The text of the last line is obscure/corrupt but proposed emendations are unsatisfactory. The NRSV has, "and hostility in the house of his God."

⁹ Alternative readings for the 1st line, here following the NJB, are 'they have deeply corrupted themselves' (as NRSV) and "they have sunk deep into corruption" (as NETB).

<p>כַּעֲנַבִּים בַּמִּדְבָּר מֵצֵאתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכַוְרֵהָ בְּתֵאֵנָה בְּרֵאשִׁיתָהּ רָאִיתִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם הִמָּה בָּאוּ בְּעַל־פְּעוֹר וַיִּנְזְרוּ לַבִּשְׁת וַיְהִיו שְׁקוּצִים כְּאֵהָבָם: אֶפְרַיִם כְּעוֹף יִתְעוֹפֵף כְּבוֹדָם מִלְדָּה וּמִבְּטָן וּמִהַרְיוֹן: כִּי אִם־יִגְדְּלוּ אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְשִׁפְלֵתִים מֵאָדָם כִּי־גַם־אֹזִי לָהֶם בְּשׁוּרֵי מָהֶם: אֶפְרַיִם כְּאֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי לְצוֹר שְׂתוּלָה בְּנוֹה וְאֶפְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶל־הַרְג בְּנָיו: תִּן־לָהֶם יְהוָה מֵהַתֵּתֵן תִּן־לָהֶם רַחֵם מִשְׁפִּיל וְשֹׁדִים צִמְקִים:</p>	<p>י יא יב יג יד</p>	<p>10 It was like finding grapes in the desert when I found Israel, like seeing early fruit on a fig tree when I saw your ancestors; but when they reached Baal-Peor, they devoted themselves to Shame and became as loathsome as the thing they loved. 11 The glory of Ephraim will fly away like a bird: no giving birth, no pregnancy, and no conceiving. 12 If they rear their children, I shall take them away before they grow up! Woe to them indeed when I leave them! 13 Ephraim looked to me like Tyre, planted in a meadow, so Ephraim will present his children to the slaughterer. 14 Give them, Yahweh – what are you to give? Give them wombs that miscarry and dried up breasts.</p>
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10 The incident at 'Baal-Peor', related in Nb 25, had occurred on the plain east of Jordan (see #Jos 2:1), at the very gates of the Promised Land, and had disfigured its history ever since. 'Shame' translates בִּשְׁת, a disparaging name for Baal (see #2S 4:4).

11 The preposition מן prefixed to the three parallel nouns of the 2nd line functions in a privative sense, indicating deprivation.

12 The literal translation of the 2nd line is 'I will bereave them from a man'; the NRSV reads, 'I will bereave them until no one is left'.

13 This is a very difficult, probably corrupt, verse, which literally translates, "Ephraim, as I see for Tyre, planted in a meadow." Perhaps the prophet means to compare the splendour of Ephraim to that of Tyre (cf. Is 23:7ff, Ezk 27), but the word is uncertain. The LXX reads 'game' (θήρα) instead of 'Tyre' (צור).

14 The literal translation of 'dried up breasts' is 'breasts that shrivel up dry'.

טו כָּל־רַעְתָּם בַּגִּלְגָּל
 כִּי־שָׂם שְׂנֵאתִים
 עַל רָע מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם
 מִבֵּיתִי אֶגְרָשׁם
 לֹא אוֹסֵף אֶהְבֶּתֶם
 כָּל־שָׂרֵיהֶם סֹרְרִים:
 טז הִכָּה אֶפְרַיִם שָׂרְשָׁם יָבֵשׁ
 פְּרִי בְלִי בְלִי־יֵעָשׂוּן
 גַּם כִּי יֵלְדוּן
 וְהִמַּתִּי מִחֲמַדֵּי בִטְנָם:
 יז יִמְאַסֶּם אֱלֹהֵי כִי לֹא שָׁמְעוּ לוֹ
 וַיְהִיו נִדְדִים בְּגוֹיִם: {ס}

15 Their wickedness appeared in full at Gilgal;
there, I came to hate them.

Because of the wickedness of their deeds,
I shall drive them from my home;
I shall love them no longer;
all their princes are rebels.

16 Ephraim is blasted, their root has dried out,
and they will bear no more fruit.

Even if they do bear children,
I shall slaughter the darlings of their womb.

17 Since they have not listened to him, my God will cast them off
and they will become wanderers among the nations.

¹⁵ The last line probably refers to Saul's disobedience at Gilgal (1S 13:7-14, 15:12-33), prolonged by the rebellion of the leading men.

¹⁶ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ The NRSV has 'will reject them' in place of 'will cast them off', here following the NJB.

הושע פרק י

א גִּפְנֵי בּוֹקֵק יִשְׂרָאֵל
פְּרֵי יְשׁוּהָ לָּו
כָּרַב לְפְרִיָּו
הֲרַבָּה לְמִזְבְּחֹתָיִם
כְּטוֹב לְאֶרְצוֹ
הֵיטִיבוּ מִצְבּוֹתָיִם:
ב חֶלֶק לִבָּם
עֲתָה יֵאָשְׁמוּ
הוּא יַעַרְף מִזְבְּחֹתָיִם
יִשְׁדָּד מִצְבּוֹתָיִם:
ג כִּי עֲתָה יֹאמְרוּ אֵין מֶלֶךְ לָנוּ
כִּי לֹא יִרְאֵנוּ
אֶת־יְהוָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־יַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּנוּ:
ד דְּבָרוּ דְבָרִים
אֱלוֹת שׁוֹא כָּרַת בְּרִית
וּפְרָח כְּרָאשׁ מְשֻׁפֵּט
עַל תְּלָמֵי שָׂדֵי:

HOSEA 10

- 1 Israel was a luxuriant vine
yielding plenty of fruit.
The more his fruit increased,
the more altars he built;
the richer his land became,
the richer he made the sacred pillars.
- 2 Theirs is a divided heart;
now they will have to pay for it.
He himself will hack down their altars
and wreck their sacred pillars.
- 3 Then they will say, "We have no king
because we have not feared Yahweh,
but what could the king do for us?"
- 4 Speeches are made, oaths sworn to no purpose,
arguments concluded,
and so-called justice spreads like a poisonous weed
along the furrows of the fields!

HOSEA 10

¹ On the 'sacred pillars', see Ex 23:24.

² The division is between Yahweh and Baal.

³ Assyrian tutelage and the instability of the throne have brought effective government to a standstill.

⁴ The 3rd line is ironical: what prospers is the poisonous perversion of justice (cf. Am 6:12); the noun ראש refers to a 'poisonous plant' (Dt 29:17) or 'bitter herb' (Ps 69:22, Lm 3:5).

<p>ה לְעִגְלוֹת בַּיִת אֲזֶן יִגְוְרוּ שְׁבָן שִׁמְרוֹן כִּי־אֲבַל עָלָיו עֲמוֹ וּכְמָרְיוֹ עָלָיו יִגְילוּ עַל־כְּבוֹדוֹ כִּי־גָלָה מִמֶּנּוּ: וּגַם־אוֹתוֹ לְאֲשׁוּר יוֹבֵל מִנְחָה לְמֶלֶךְ יָרֵב בְּשָׁנָה אֶפְרַיִם יִקַּח וַיְבוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲצָתוֹ: נִדְמָה שִׁמְרוֹן מִלִּבְיָהּ בְּקֶצֶף עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם: וַיִּשְׁמְדוּ בַמּוֹת אֲזֶן חֲטָאֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹץ וְדַרְדָּר יַעֲלֶה עַל־מִזְבְּחוֹתֵם וְאָמְרוּ לְהָרִים כְּסוּנוּ וּלְגִבְעוֹת נִפְלוּ עָלֵינוּ: {פ}</p>	<p>ו ט מִימֵי הַגִּבְעָה חֲטָאֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹשֵׂם עֲמָדוֹ</p>	<p>5 Samaria's citizens will tremble for the calf of Beth-Aven; its idolatrous priests will mourn for it, as they exult in its glory once it has been carried away!</p> <p>6 It will be carried off the Assyria as tribute to the Great King. Ephraim will reap the shame and Israel blush for his intentions.</p> <p>7 Samaria's king shall perish, like a twig drifting on the water.</p> <p>8 The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; thorns and thistles will grow over their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us," and to the hills, "fall on us!"</p> <p>9 Since the days of Gibeah, Israel, you have sinned. There, they have taken their stand,</p>
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5 'Calf' follows the LXX (μóσχω) and Peshitta; the MT has 'calves' (לְעִגְלוֹת).
6 'Great King' is a conjectural translation (מֶלֶךְ יָרֵב); the MT has 'King Jarev' (מֶלֶךְ יָרֵב = 'a king who contends'), cf. 5:13.
7 For the 1st line, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'Samaria has had her day'. The noun קֶצֶף ('twig', here following NETB; the NJB has 'straw' and NRSV has 'chip') is a hapax legomenon. Historically, it has been understood in two different ways: 1 'foam', as Vg (*spumam*), Aquila, and Symmachus; and 2 'snapped-off twig', as LXX (*φρύγανον*), Theodotion and the Peshitta. Both make sense in the light of the simile.
8 For 'high places of Aven', here following the MT (בַּמּוֹת אֲזֶן), NJB & NRSV, several MSS read בַּמּוֹת בַּיִת אֲזֶן ('high places of Beth-Aven'). In 4:15, the name 'Beth-Aven' ('house of wickedness') is a wordplay on 'Bethel' ('house of God'); here, 'house' (בַּיִת) may have been dropped by scribal error.
9 Hosea sees continuity between the crime at Gibeah (Jg 19) and the crimes of the present day. He predicts the same continuity of punishment.

לֹא־תִשְׁיָגֶם בַּגְּבֻעָה מִלְחָמָה עַל־בְּנֵי עֵלְוָה:
 בְּאוֹתֵי וְאִסְרֵם י
 וְאִסְפוּ עֲלֵיהֶם עֵמִים
 בְּאִסְרֵם לְשִׁתִּי עֵינַתֶּם עֹנֹתֶם:
 וְאִפְרַיִם עֵגְלָה מִלְמַדָּה יא
 אֲהַבֵּתִי לְדֹשׁ
 וְאֲנִי עֲבַרְתִּי
 עַל־טוֹב צִנְאָרָה
 אֲרַכִּיב אִפְרַיִם יַחְרוֹשׁ יְהוּדָה
 יִשְׁדַּדְד־לוֹ יַעֲקֹב:
 זֶרְעוּ לָכֶם לְצַדִּיקָה קַצְרוּ לְפִי־חֶסֶד יב
 גִּירוּ לָכֶם גֵּיר
 וְעַת לְדָרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה
 עַד־יָבֹא וִירָה צֶדֶק לָכֶם:
 חֲרַשְׁתֶּם־רָשָׁע עוֹלְתָה קַצְרֹתֶם יג
 אֲכַלְתֶּם פְּרִי־כַחֵשׁ
 כִּי־בִטַחְתֶּם בְּדַרְכְּכֶם
 בְּרַב גְּבוּרֵיכֶם:

and will not war overtake the guilty at Gibeah?
 10 When I please, I will punish them;
 nations will muster against them
 to punish them for their two crimes.
 11 Ephraim is a well-trained heifer
 that loves to tread the grain;
 but I have laid a yoke on her fine neck,
 I shall put Ephraim into harness,
 Judah will have to plough,
 Jacob must draw the harrow.
 12 Sow saving justice for yourselves,
 reap a harvest of faithful love;
 break up your fallow ground; it is time to seek out Yahweh
 until he comes to rain saving justice down on you.
 13 You have ploughed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity
 and you have eaten the fruit of falsehood.
 Because you have trusted in your chariots,
 in your great numbers of warriors,

10 The literal translation of 'when I please' (here following NETB) is 'in my desire'. For 'punish them', here following the LXX (παιδεῦσαι αὐτούς), the MT reads **וְאִסְרֵם** ('I will bind'); the LXX reflects **אִסְרֵם**, involving orthographic confusion between י & א and metathesis of the two letters. In place of 'crimes', here following the Qere (**עֹנֹתֶם**), the Ketiv has 'eyes' (**עֵינַתֶּם**).

11 Vv. 11-12 refer to the plan Yahweh had for Ephraim: a mission was given to him expressed in terms of the metaphor of sowing and reaping.

12 Alternative readings for 'saving justice' (as NJB) are 'righteousness' (as NRSV) and 'deliverance' (as NETB).

13 'In your chariots' follows the LXX (ἐν τοῖς ἄρμασίν σου) and NJB; the MT has 'in your own way' (**בְּדַרְכְּכֶם**) and the NRSV has 'in your power'.

וְקָאֵם שָׂאוֹן בְּעַמּוֹךָ ^ד
 וְכָל-מִבְצָרֶיךָ יִשָּׂד
 כְּשֵׂד שְׁלֹמֹן בֵּית אַרְבָּאֵל בְּיוֹם מִלְחָמָה
 אִם עַל-בָּנִים רָטְשָׁה:
 כָּכָה עֲשֵׂה לָכֶם בֵּית-אֵל ^ט
 מִפְּנֵי רָעַת רַעְתְּכֶם
 בַּשָּׁחַר נִדְמָה נִדְמָה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

¹⁴ turmoil is going to break out among your people,
 and all your fortresses will be laid waste.
 As Shalman laid Beth-Arbel waste on the day of battle,
 dashing mothers to pieces with their children,
¹⁵ so it shall be done to you, Bethel,
 because of your great wickedness;
 at dawn, the king of Israel will be no more.

¹⁴ 'Shalman' (שְׁלֹמֹן) is possibly Salamanu, a Moabite prince and contemporary of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BCE), on the occasion of a raid on 'Beth-Arbel' (Irbid) in Gilead. An alternative reading for 'with their children' is 'on their children'; atrocities of this kind were usual when towns were captured (see 14:1, 2K 8:12, Ps 137:9, Is 13:16, Na 3:10).

¹⁵ Dawn was usually the time chosen for a surprise attack (Jg 9:33–37, Ps 46:5, Is 17:14), hence the moment when God awarded victory or punished by defeat.

הושע פרק יא

א כִּי נָעַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶהְבֵּהוּ
וּמִמִּצְרַיִם קָרָאתִי לְבְנִי:
ב קָרָאוּ לָהֶם
כַּן הִלְכוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם לְבַעֲלִים יִזְבְּחוּ
וּלְפִסְלִים יִקְטְרוּן:
ג וְאֲנִכִי תִרְגַּלְתִּי לְאֶפְרַיִם
קָחֶם עַל־זְרוּעֹתַי
וְלֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי רִפְאֵתִים:
ד בְּחַבְלֵי אָדָם אֲמַשְׁכֶּם בְּעִבְתוֹת אֶהְבֶּה
וְאֶהְיֶה לָהֶם כְּמִרְיָמִי עַל עַל לְחִיָּהֶם
וְאֵט אֲלִיוֹ אוֹכִיל:
ה לֹא יָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וְאַשׁוּר הוּא מֶלֶכּוֹ
כִּי מֵאֲנֹו לָשׁוּב:

HOSEA 11

- 1 When Israel was a child I loved him,
and I called my son out of Egypt.
- 2 The more I called, the further they went from me;
they offered sacrifice to Baal
and burnt incense to idols.
- 3 I myself taught Ephraim to walk,
I myself took them by the arm,
but they did not know that I was the one caring for them.
- 4 I lead them with human ties, with leading strings of love.
With them, I was like someone lifting the yoke from his neck,
and I bent down to feed him.
- 5 He will not have to go back to Egypt:
Assyria will be his king instead,
since he has refused to come back to me.

HOSEA 11

- 1 In place of בְּנִי ('my son'), here following the MT, the LXX (τέκνα αὐτοῦ, 'his sons') reflects בְּנָיו; the MT may be retained as original here because of internal evidence: it is much more appropriate to the context.
- 2 The 1st line follows the LXX (καθὼς μετεκάλεσα αὐτούς, οὕτως ἀπώχοντο ἐκ προσώπου μου) & Peshitta; the MT has 'they called them, so they went away from them'.
- 3 The verb תִּרְגַּלְתִּי ('I taught ... to walk' – a Tiphil perfect 1CS from רָגַל, 'to walk') is an unusual verb stem: the Tiphil is attested three times in Biblical Hebrew (here, Jr 12:5 & 22:15) and once in Biblical Aramaic (Ezr 4:7).
- 4 In place of 'a yoke from his neck', following the MT, the NJB has the conjectural 'an infant to his cheek'. 'To feed him' is conjectural; 'him' (אֵלָיו) must have disappeared by haplography with the first word of the next verse.
- 5 For the 1st line, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "They shall return to the land of Egypt," emending of the לֹא ('not') to לָו ('to him').

<p>וְחָלָה חֶרֶב בְּעָרָיו וְכִלְתָּהּ בְּדָיו וְאָכְלָהּ מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם: וְעַמִּי תְלוּאִים לְמִשׁוֹבְתֵי וְאֶל-עַל יִקְרָאָהּ יַחַד לֹא יְרוּמִם: אֵיךְ אֶתְנֶנְךָ אֶפְרַיִם אֲמַגְנֶנְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵיךְ אֶתְנֶנְךָ כְּאַדְמָה אֲשִׁימֶנְךָ כְּצִבְאִים נִהְפֶּנְךָ עָלַי לְבִי יַחַד נִכְמְרוּ נְחוּמִי: לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה חֶרוֹן אֲפִי לֹא אָשׁוּב לְשַׁחַת אֶפְרַיִם כִּי אֵל אֲנִי וְלֹא-אִישׁ בְּקִרְבֶּנִי קְדוֹשׁ וְלֹא אָבוֹא בְּעִיר:</p>	<p>ו ז ח ט</p>	<p>6 The sword will rage through his cities, destroying the bars of his gates, devouring them because of their schemes.</p> <p>7 My people are bent on disregarding me; if they are summoned to come up, not one of them makes a move.</p> <p>8 Ephraim, how could I part with you? Israel, how could I give you up? How could I make you like Admah or treat you like Zeboiim? My heart within me is overwhelmed and fever grips my inmost being.</p> <p>9 I will not give rein to my fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again, for I am God, not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I shall not come to you in anger.</p>
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⁶ In place of ‘because of their schemes’, following the NRSV (the NJB has ‘plots’), NETB has ‘in their fortresses’.

⁷ For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “To the Most High they call;” the syntax of the MT is enigmatic, and some emend to וְאֶל-עַל יִקְרָא וְהוּא (‘they call to Baal, but he’), connecting the 3MS independent personal pronoun (וְהוּא) with the following clause. *Aquila, Symm*, the Tg and Vg vocalise עַל as ‘yoke’ – ‘they cry out because of their yoke’. The 3rd line is obscure and the translation is uncertain (here following the NJB); the NRSV has, “but he does not raise them up at all.”

⁸ ‘Admah’ (אֲדָמָה) and ‘Zeboiim’ (צִבְאִים) were two of the five towns of the Pentapolis (Gn 10:19, 14:2, 8, Dt 29:22).

⁹ God’s transcendence is strongly emphasised but, unlike other more ancient texts (Ex 19:2, 2S 6:6-8) or more recent ones (Is 6:3), here it is divested of all terrifying aspects and is expressed in terms of love. God’s holiness manifests itself in compassion and forgiveness, whereas it is human to give free rein to anger.

אַחֲרַי יִהְיֶה יִלְכוּ י
 כְּאַרְיֵה יִשְׁאַג
 כִּי־הוּא יִשְׁאַג
 וַיִּחַרְדּוּ בָנִים מִיָּם:
 יַחַרְדּוּ כְּצִפּוֹר מִמִּצְרַיִם יא
 וּכְיוֹנָה מֵאַרְץ אַשּׁוּר
 וְהוֹשְׁבֵתֵימ עַל־בְּתֵיהֶם
 נֹאמַר־יְהוָה: {ס}

10 They will follow Yahweh;
 he will roar like a lion
 and, when he roars,
 his children will come trembling from the west,
 11 trembling like sparrows from Egypt,
 like pigeons from Assyria,
 and I shall settle them in their homes –
 says Yahweh.

¹⁰ Vv. 10–11, elaborating on the ideas of vv. 8–9, are probably a later addition dating from the Babylonian captivity.

¹¹ When the verb חרד ('to tremble') is used with prepositions of direction, it denotes 'to go or come trembling'.

הושע פרק יב

א סִבְּבֵנִי בְּכַחַשׁ אֶפְרַיִם
וּבְמַרְמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיְהוּדָה עַד רֹדֵף עַם־אֱלֹהִים
וְעַם־קְדוֹשִׁים נֶאֱמָן:
ב אֶפְרַיִם רֹעֵה רוּחַ
וְרֹדֵף קָדִים כָּל־הַיּוֹם
כְּזָב וְשֹׂד יִרְבֶּה
וּבְרִית עַם־אַשּׁוּר יִכְרֹתוּ
וְשִׁמֹן לְמִצְרַיִם יוֹבֵל:
ג וְרִיב לִיהוָה עַם־יְהוּדָה
וּלְפָקֵד עַל־יַעֲקֹב כְּדַרְכָּיו
כְּמַעַלְלָיו יֵשִׁיב לוֹ:
ד בְּבֶטֶן עֵקֵב אֶת־אָחִיו
וּבְאוֹנוֹ שָׂרָה אֶת־אֱלֹהִים:

HOSEA 12

- 1 Ephraim besieges me with lying,
the House of Judah with duplicity;
but Judah still is on God's side:
he is faithful to the Holy One.
- 2 Ephraim feeds himself on wind;
all day he chases the wind from the East,
he heaps up cheating and violence;
they make a treaty with Assyria,
at the same time sending oil to Egypt.
- 3 Yahweh has a case against Judah;
he will punish Jacob as his conduct merits
and he will repay him as his deeds deserve.
- 4 In the very womb he overreached his brother,
in maturity he wrestled against God.

HOSEA 12

- ¹ The NRSV includes this verse as 11:12 and, therein, all subsequent verse numbers in this chapter are accordingly decremented. The last two lines (parenthesised in the NJB) are a later addition or adaptation (see #1:7); after 'still', the MT reads 'roams with God' but the sense of this is not clear – perhaps we should follow the LXX (νῦν ἔργω αὐτοῦς ὁ θεός): "But (Judah) is still known to God."
- ² The scorching 'wind' from the desert here symbolises Assyria (cf. 13:15, Jr 18:17, Ezk 17:10).
- ³ Instead of 'Judah', the primitive reading was surely 'Israel'; the change is a result of a desire to apply the prophecy of Hosea in the Southern Kingdom (see the #1:7). The noun רִיב in Hosea refers to a covenant lawsuit in which Yahweh the suzerain lodges a legal case against his disobedient vassal, accusing Israel and Judah of breach of covenant which will elicit the covenant curses.
- ⁴ This verse speaks of ambition and arrogance innate and persistent. Hosea interprets these episodes unfavourably (see vv. 13–14): a sinner from his mother's womb, Jacob so continued in later life. The verb שָׂרָה ('he wrestled') means 'to strive', 'to contend' or 'persevere', 'persist'.

<p>וַיִּשְׂר אֶל־מְלֹאךְ וַיִּכַּל בָּכָה וַיִּתְחַנֵּן־לּוֹ בֵּית־אֵל יִמְצְאוּנוּ וְשֵׁם יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ: וַיְהוֹה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת יְהוָה זְכָרוֹ: וְאַתָּה בִּאֱלֹהֶיךָ תָשׁוּב חֶסֶד וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁמֹר וּקְנֹה אֶל־אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּמְיֵד: כְּנֻעַן בְּיָדוֹ מֵאֲזַנֵּי מִרְמָה לְעֵשֶׂק אֶהְבֵּב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶפְרַיִם אֶךְ עָשִׂרְתִּי מִצָּאתִי אֲזֹן לִי כָּל־יִגְיֵעִי לֹא יִמְצְאוּ־לִי עֹן אֲשֶׁר־חָטָא: וְאַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם</p>	<p>ה ו ז ח ט י</p>	<p>5 He wrestled with the angel and beat him; he wept and pleaded with him. He met him at Bethel and there God spoke to us. 6 Yes, Yahweh, God Sabaoth, Yahweh is his title! 7 Therefore, turn back with God’s help, maintain faithful love and loyalty and wait eagerly for your God. 8 Merchants use fraudulent scales: to defraud is his delight. 9 “How rich I have become,” says Ephraim, “I have made a fortune!” But of all his gains, he will keep nothing because of the sin of which he is guilty. 10 I have been Yahweh your God since your days in Egypt</p>
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5 ‘To us’ (עִמָּנוּ) is sometimes emended to ‘with him’, as in the LXX (πρὸς αὐτόν), Peshitta & NRSV, in line with Gn 35:15.
6 The literal translation of ‘title’ (here following the NJB – the NRSV has ‘name’) is ‘memorial name’.
7 The verb וּקְנֹה (vav + Piel imperative 2MS) means ‘to hope for’, ‘to wait for’, or ‘to look eagerly for’; the Qal meaning refers to a general hope; the Piel meaning refers to hope directed toward a target, or hope inserted within a sequence of expectation and fulfilment. When the Piel is used in reference to a thing, it refers to waiting expectantly for something to occur.
8 The name, ‘Canaan’, came to be synonymous with ‘merchant’ (Is 23:8, Ezk 17:4, Zc 14:21), owing to Canaanite skill at commerce.
9 The last two lines here follow the LXX (and NJB); the MT is obscure (literally, ‘all my gains, guilt for sin will not be found in me’) and the NRSV has ‘in all of my gain, no offence has been found in me that would be sin’.
10 Here, the reference is either to ‘the Tent of Meeting’ (Ex 33:7) or to the stay at Sinai, where God had fixed a meeting with his people (Ex 3:12).

עַד אֹשִׁיבֶךָ בְּאֹהֳלִים
 כִּימֵי מוֹעֵד:
 וְדַבַּרְתִּי עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים א'
 וְאֲנֹכִי חֲזוֹן הַרְבִּיתִי
 וּבִיד הַנְּבִיאִים אֲדַמָּה:
 אִם־גִּלְעָד אֲוֹן אֶדְ-שָׁוָא הִיוּ ב'
 בְּגִלְגָל שְׁוֹרִים זָבְחוּ
 גַם מִזְבְּחוֹתֶם כְּגִלִּים
 עַל תְּלָמֵי שָׂדֵי:
 וַיִּבְרַח יַעֲקֹב שָׂדֵה אַרָם ג'
 וַיַּעֲבֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאִשָּׁה
 וּבְאִשָּׁה שָׁמַר:
 וּבְנָבִיא הָעֵלָה יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם ד'
 וּבְנָבִיא נִשְׁמַר:
 הַכְּעִיס אֶפְרַיִם תַּמְרוּרִים ט'
 וְדָמּוּ עָלָיו יִטּוֹשׁ וְחָרַפְתּוּ
 יָשִׁיב לוֹ אֲדָנָיו:

and will make you live in tents again
 as in the days of Meeting.
 11 I will speak through prophets;
 I will give vision after vision;
 and, through the prophets, will speak in parables.
 12 Is Gilead a sink of iniquity? Yes, they are a worthless lot!
 At Gilgal, they sacrifice to bulls:
 that is why their altars are like heaps of stones
 in a ploughed field.
 13 Jacob fled to the countryside of Aram;
 Israel served to win a wife,
 to win a wife he looked after sheep.
 14 By a prophet Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt
 and a prophet guarded Israel.
 15 Ephraim bitterly provoked him –
 Yahweh will bring his bloodshed down on him;
 his Lord will repay him for his insult.

11 In place of 'speak in parables', here following the NJB, NIV & NJPS, the NRSV has 'bring destruction'.

12 'To bulls' is a conjectural translation (following the NJB); the MT and NRSV have simply 'bulls'.

13 In place of 'served', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'slaved' and NETB has 'worked'.

14 The repetition of the verb שָׁמַר ('guarded') in vv. 13-14 creates parallels between Jacob's sojourn in Aram and Israel's sojourn in the wilderness.

15 The noun תַּמְרוּרִים ('bitter things') is here an adverbial accusative of manner, modifying 'provoked'; the plural is that of intensity.

הושע פרק יג

כְּדַבֵּר אֶפְרַיִם רָתַתְּ א
נִשְׂאָה הוּא בְיִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיֵּאשֶׁם בַּבַּעַל וַיָּמָת׃
וַעֲתָהּ | יוֹסֵפוּ לַחֲטֹאֵ
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מַסֵּכָה מִכֶּסֶּפֶם כְּתַבּוּנִם עֲצָבִים
מַעֲשֵׂה חֲרָשִׁים כְּלֵה
לָהֶם הֵם אֲמָרִים
זִבְחֵי אָדָם
עֲגָלִים יִשְׁקֹוּ׃
לִכֵּן יִהְיוּ כַעֲנַן־בֹּקֶר ג
וְכַטָּל מִשְׁכִּים הַלֶּקֶךְ
כַּמֶּץ יִסְעַר מִגֶּרֶן
וְכַעֲשָׁן מֵאַרְבֶּה׃
וְאַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם ד
וְאַלֹהִים זֹלַתִּי לֹא תִדַע
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ אֵין בְּלַתִּי׃

HOSEA 13

- 1 When Ephraim used to speak, all trembled;
he was exalted in Israel;
but once he had incurred guilt with Baal, he died.
- 2 And now they compound their sins
by casting images for themselves out of their silver,
idols of their own invention,
the work of craftsmen, all of it!
"Sacrifice to them," they say!
Men bestow kisses to calves!
- 3 That is why they will be like morning mist,
like the dew that quickly disappears,
like the chaff whirled from the threshing-floor,
like smoke escaping through the window.
- 4 Yet, I have been Yahweh your God since your days in Egypt,
when you knew no god but me,
since you had no one else to save you.

HOSEA 13

- 1 'Was exalted' follows the LXX (δικαιώματα αὐτὸς ἔλαβεν), Peshitta, NRSV & NETB (the NJB has 'was a power'); the MT has 'exalted' (נִשְׂאָה): the LXX reflects a different vocalisation (נִשְׂאָה).
- 2 'Sacrifice to them' is conjectural; the MT has 'those who sacrifice'. Kissing the 'calves' was an act of homage (see 1K 19:18).
- 3 The phrase כַּעֲנַן־בֹּקֶר ('like morning mist') occurs also in 6:4 in a similar simile.
- 4 For the 1st line, here following the MT, the LXX has a considerably extended version:
ἐγὼ δὲ κύριος ὁ θεός σου στερεῶν οὐρανὸν καὶ κτιζῶν γῆν, οὐ αἰ
χειρες ἔκτισαν πᾶσαν τῆν στρατιὰν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οὐ παρέθειξά I am the LORD your God who set the heavens' form and keeps the earth
steady; my hands have created the whole array of heaven but I have not

<p>ה אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ תְּלָאֲבוֹת: ו כִּמְרַעֲיָתֶם וַיִּשְׂבְּעוּ שְׂבָעוּ וַיִּרְם לִבָּם עַל־כֵּן שָׁכַחוּנִי: ז וַאֲהִי לָהֶם כְּמוֹ־שֹׁחַל כְּנֹמֵר עַל־דֶּרֶךְ אֲשׁוּר: ח אֶפְגָּשֶׁם כְּדָב שֹׁפֹל וְאֶקְרַע סָגוֹר לִבָּם וְאֶכְלֵם שֵׁם כְּלָבִיא ט חֵית הַשָּׂדֵה תִּבְקַעֵם: י שְׁחַתְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־בִי בַעֲזָרְךָ: יְ אֱהִי מֶלֶכְךָ אִפּוֹא וַיִּשְׁעֶךָ בְּכָל־עָרֶיךָ וְשִׁפְטֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ תְּנֵה־לִּי מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים:</p>	<p>5 I cared for you in the desert, in the land of dreadful drought. 6 I pastured them, and they were satisfied; once satisfied, their hearts grew proud, and therefore they forgot me. 7 So now I will be like a lion to them; like a leopard, I shall lurk beside the road; 8 like a bear robbed of her cubs I shall meet them and rend the membrane of their heart, and there like a lioness I shall eat them, like a wild beast tear them to shreds. 9 Israel, you have destroyed yourself though in me lies your help. 10 Your king, where is he now, to save you, or the governors in all your cities, whom you once pleaded for, saying, "Give me a king and princes"?</p>
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σοι ἀπὸ τοῦ πορεύεσθαι ὀπίσω αὐτῶν· καὶ ἐγὼ ἀνήγαγον σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου shown these to you for you to follow them. I it was who brought you up out of Egypt.

- 5 'Cared for you' (the NRSV has 'fed you') follows the LXX (ἐγὼ ἐποιμαίνον σε) and Peshitta; the MT has 'knew you'.
6 'I pastured them' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'according to their pasture'.
7 The *vav* consecutive + preterite form וַאֲהִי ('so now') introduces a consequential or result clause.
8 The NJB includes the 1st line in v. 7; here, we follow the MT, LXX & NRSV.
9 The translation of the 2nd line (as NJB) is uncertain; the NRSV, following the LXX (τίς βοηθήσει) & Peshitta, has, "who can help you?"
10 The 1st line may be an ironical allusion to King Hoshea (732–724 BCE) whose name means 'Yahweh saves'.

א אֶתְנֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ בְּאַפִּי וְאָקַח בְּעִבְרָתִי: {פ} ב צָרוּר עֹן אֶפְרַיִם צָפוּנָה חֹטְאָתוֹ: ג חֲבִלֵי יוֹלְדָה יִבְאוּ לוֹ הוּא־בֵן לֹא חָכָם כִּי־עַתָּה לֹא־יַעֲמֵד בְּמִשְׁבֵּר בְּנִים: ד מִיַּד שְׂאוֹל אֶפְדֵם מִמּוֹת אַגְאָלִים אֱהִי דְבַרְיָךְ מוֹת אֱהִי קִטְבֹּךְ שְׂאוֹל נָחֵם יִסְתֵּר מֵעֵינַי: ו כִּי הוּא בֵּין אֲחִים יִפְרִיא יָבוֹא קָדִים רוּחַ יְהוָה מִמִּדְבָּר עֲלֶיהָ וַיְבּוֹשׂ מְקוֹרוֹ וַיַּחַרֵּב מֵעֵינָו הוּא יִשְׁסֶה ז אוֹצֵר כָּל־כֶּלִי חֲמֻדָּה:	11 In my anger, I gave you a king and in my wrath, I have taken him away. 12 Ephraim's guilt is packed away and his sin is locked up. 13 Pangs as of childbirth overtake him, and a stupid child he is; his time is due, but he does not leave the womb. 14 Shall I save them from the clutches of Sheol? Shall I buy them back from Death? Where are your plagues, Death? Where are your scourges, Sheol? Compassion will be banished from my sight! 15 Though he bears more fruit than his brothers, the wind from the East will come, Yahweh's breath blowing up from the desert to dry his spring, to dry up his fountain, to strip his treasury of everything worth having.
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- 11 The prefix-conjugation verb אֶתְנֶן (*I gave*) refers to past action, specifying a definite event (enthronement of Saul); so, this should be classified as a preterite. While the imperfect tense is occasionally used in reference to past events, it depicts repeated action in the past.
- 12 The noun עֹן has a three-fold range of meanings: 1 *'iniquity'* (as NRSV), 2 *'guilt'* (as NJB), and 3 *'punishment'* (as NETB); the oracle of 13:12–13 announces that Israel's punishment, though momentarily withheld, will suddenly come upon her like labour pains that will kill her.
- 13 The metaphor of the *'pangs of childbirth'* is here used for the first time to describe the catastrophe hanging over the nation.
- 14 The context demands that this verse be interpreted as a threat. *'Sheol'* (שְׂאוֹל) is the place of the dead.
- 15 The literal translation of the 1st line, here following the NJB, is *"He flourishes (as) a son of brothers;"* the LXX (διότι οὗτος ἀνὰ μέσον ἀδελφῶν διαστειλεῖ), Peshitta & Vg (*Quia ipse inter fratres dividet*) read, *"He causes division between brothers."*

הושע פרק יד

תֹּאשֵׁם שְׁמֵרוֹן א
כִּי מָרַתָּה בְּאֱלֹהֶיהָ
בַּחֶרֶב יִפְּלוּ עַל־לִבְיָהֶם יִרְטְשׁוּ
וְהָרִיזוּתֵי יִבְקְעוּ:
{פ}
שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד יַהֲוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ב
כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעֹגֹדֶיךָ:
קַח חֹו עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים ג
וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל־יַהֲוָה
אִמְרוּ אֵלָיו
כִּלְת־שָׂא עֹו וְקַח־טוֹב
וְנִשְׁלַמָּה פְּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ:
אֲשׁוּר | לֹא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ ד
עַל־סוֹס לֹא נִרְכָּב
וְלֹא־נֹאמַר עוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ
לְמַעַשֵׂה יַדֵּינוּ אֲשֶׁר־בָּךְ יִרְחַם יְתוֹם:
אֲרַפָּא מְשׁוּבָתָם ה

HOSEA 14

- 1 Samaria will pay the penalty
for having rebelled against her God.
They will fall by the sword,
their little children will be dashed to pieces
and their pregnant women disembowelled.
- 2 Israel, come back to Yahweh your God;
your guilt was the cause of your downfall.
- 3 Provide yourself with words
and come back to Yahweh.
Say to him, "Take all guilt away
and give us what is good;
instead of bulls, we will dedicate to you our lips.
- 4 Assyria cannot save us;
we will not ride horses any more,
or say, "Our God" to our own handiwork,
for you are the one in whom orphans find compassion."
- 5 I shall cure them of their disloyalty;

HOSEA 14

- 1 This verse is included as 13:16 in the NRSV (and most English translations); therein, subsequent verse numbers in this chapter are decremented.
- 2 The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "for you have stumbled in your iniquity."
- 3 The 'words' should be those of true repentance – preferable to sacrifices (see 6:6).
- 4 The rejection of idols also implies rejection of trusting in foreign alliances, rather than to Yahweh as sole Saviour.
- 5 The noun מְשׁוּבָתָם ('disloyalty') is from the same root as שׁוּבָה ('come back') in v. 2; this repetition creates a wordplay that emphasises reciprocity.

אָהַבְּם נְדָבָה כִּי שָׁב אָפִי מִמֶּנּוּ: אֶהְיֶה כַּטַּל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּפְרַח כַּשׁוֹשַׁנָּה וַיִּדְ שָׁרְשָׁיו כַּלְבַּנּוֹן: יִלְכוּ יִנְקוּתָיו וַיְהִי כַּזַּיִת הַחוּד וְרִיחַ לֹא כַּלְבַּנּוֹן: יָשׁוּבוּ יִשְׁבִּי בְצֵלוֹ יַחֲיוּ דָגָן וַיִּפְרְחוּ כַּגֶּפֶן זָכְרוּ כִּיִּין לְבַנּוֹן: אֶפְרַיִם מִה־לִּי עוֹד לְעַצְבִּים אֲנִי עֹנִיתִי וְאֲשׁוּרְנוּ אֲנִי כַּבְּרוֹשׁ רַעֲנָן מִמֶּנִּי פְרִיָךְ נִמְצָא: מִי חָכֵם וַיִּבֶן אֱלֹהִים נְבוֹן וַיִּדְעֵם כִּי־יִשְׁרִים דְרָכֵי יְהוָה	ו ז ח ט י	I shall love them with all my heart, for my anger has turned away from them. 6 I shall fall like dew on Israel; he will bloom like the lily and thrust out roots like the cedar of Lebanon. 7 He will put out new shoots; he will have the beauty of the olive tree and the fragrance of Lebanon. 8 They will come back to live in my shade; they will grow wheat again; they will make the vine flourish and their wine will be as famous as Lebanon's. 9 What has Ephraim to do with idols any more, when I hear him and watch over him? I am like an evergreen cypress; you owe your fruitfulness to me. 10 Let the wise understand these words; let the intelligent grasp their meaning. For, Yahweh's ways are straight
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⁶ 'The cedar of' (the NRSV has 'the forests of') is supplied, and is not present in the MT.

⁷ Before 'Lebanon', NETB adds 'a cedar of' (see #6); here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

⁸ The 1st line is conjectural (following the NJB); the MT has 'those who live in his shade will come back' and the LXX has 'they will come back and live in his shade' (ἐπιστρέψουσιν και καθίσουσιν ὑπὸ τῆς σκέπης αὐτοῦ).

⁹ The 1st line is conjectural (following the NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has, "O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols."

¹⁰ The shortened form of the prefix-conjugation verb וַיִּבֶן ('let ... understand') indicates that it is a jussive rather than an imperfect.

וְצַדִּיקִים יֵלְכוּ בָּם
וּפְשָׁעִים יִכְשָׁלוּ בָּם:

{ש}

and the upright will walk in them,
but sinners will stumble.