
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

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:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הוֹשֵׁעַ לֵךְ קַח־לָךְ אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים וְיִלְדֵי זְנוּנִים כִּי־זִנָּה תִּזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה: ³ וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־גֹּמֶר בַּת־דִּבְלַיִם וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד־לּוֹ בֶן: ⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו קְרָא שְׁמוֹ יִזְרְעָאל כִּי־עוֹד מְעַט וּפְקַדְתִּי אֶת־דְּמֵי יִזְרְעָאל עַל־בֵּית יְהוּא וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מִמְּלָכּוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: ⁵ וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְשִׁבַּרְתִּי אֶת־קֶשֶׁת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַמְק יִזְרְעָאל: ⁶ וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בַּת וַיֹּאמֶר לּוֹ קְרָא שְׁמָהּ לֹא רַחֲמָה כִּי לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד אֲרַחֵם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־נָשָׂא אִשָּׁא לָהֶם: ⁷ וְאַת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֲרַחֵם וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּים

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 אוֹשִׁיעַם בִּקְשֵׁת וּבַחֶרֶב
 וּבַמִּלְחָמָה בְּסוּסִים וּבַפָּרָשִׁים: ^ח וַתִּגְמַל אֶת־לֹא
 רַחֲמָה וַתֵּהָר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא שְׁמוֹ לֹא עַמִּי
 כִּי אַתֶּם לֹא עַמִּי וְאֲנִכִּי 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.

HOSEA 2

הושע פרק ב

א וְהָיָה מִסְפַּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
יִמָּד וְלֹא יִסְפָּר וְהָיָה בְּמִקְוֶם אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמַר לָהֶם לֹא־
עַמִּי אַתֶּם יֹאמַר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים: ^ב וְנִקְבְּצוּ בְנֵי־
יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִחָדּוּ וְשָׁמוּ לָהֶם רֹאשׁ אֶחָד
וְעָלוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ כִּי גָדוֹל יוֹם יִזְרַעַל:

ג אָמְרוּ לְאֶחֱיָכֶם עַמִּי וּלְאֶחֻותֵיכֶם רַחֲמָה:

ד רִיבוּ בְּאִמְכֶם רִיבוּ

כִּי־הִיא לֹא אִשְׁתִּי

וְאֲנִכִּי לֹא אִישָׁה

וְתִסַּר זִנוּנֶיהָ מִפָּנֶיהָ

וְנִאֲפֹפֶיהָ מִבֵּין שָׁדֶיהָ:

ה פֶּן־אֲפְשִׁיטָנָה עֲרֻמָּה

וְהִצַּגְתִּיהָ כַּיּוֹם הַיּוֹלְדָהּ

וְשִׁמַּתִּיהָ כַּמִּדְבָּר

וְשִׁתְּהָ כָּאָרֶץ צִיָּה

וְהִמַּתִּיהָ בַּצְמָא:

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' (אֶחֱיָכֶם) and 'your sisters' (אֶחֻותֵיכֶם) 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).

וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהָ לֹא אֲרַחֵם כִּי־בְנֵי זְנוּנִים הֵמָּה: כִּי זָנְתָה אִמָּם הַבִּישָׁה הוֹרָתָם כִּי אִמָּרָה אֶלְכָּה אַחֲרֵי מֵאֵהָבִי נִתְּנִי לַחֲמִי וּמִימִי צִמְרִי וּפִשְׁתִּי שִׁמְנִי וְשִׁקּוּיִי: לִכֵּן הִנְנִי־שֹׁד אֶת־דֶּרֶכְךָ בַּסִּירִים וְגִדְדִתִּי אֶת־גִּדְּךָ וּנְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ לֹא תִמָּצֵא: וְרִדְפָה אֶת־מֵאֵהָבֶיהָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׁג אֹתָם וּבְקִשְׁתָּם וְלֹא תִמָּצֵא וְאִמָּרָה אֶלְכָּה וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֶל־אִישִׁי הָרֵאשׁוֹן כִּי טוֹב לִי אִזּוֹ מֵעַתָּה: וְהִיא לֹא יָדְעָה כִּי אֲנִכִּי נִתַּתִּי לָהּ הַדָּגָן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְהַיֶּצֶהָר וְכֶסֶף הַרְבִּיתִי לָהּ וְזָהָב עָשׂוּ לַבַּעַל:	ו	6	I shall feel no pity for her children since they are children of her whoredom.
	ז	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."
	ח	8	This is why I shall block her way with thorns, and wall her in to stop her in her tracks.
	ט	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."
	י	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!

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 לִכְן אָשׁוּב וְלִקְחָתִי דְגָנִי בְעֵתוֹ
 וְתִירוֹשִׁי בְמוֹעֵדוֹ
 וְהִצַּלְתִּי צִמְרִי וּפְשָׁתִי
 לְבָסוֹת אֶת־עֲרוֹתָהּ:
 יב וְעַתָּה אֲגַלֶּה אֶת־נִבְלָתָהּ לְעֵינֵי מְאֵהָבֶיהָ
 וְאִישׁ לֹא־יִצְלֶנָּה מִיָּדִי:
 יג וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי כָל־מְשׁוֹשֶׁהָ
 חֲגֵה חֲדָשָׁה וְשַׁבָּתָהּ
 וְכָל מוֹעֵדָהּ:
 יד וְהִשְׁמַתִּי גִפְנָהּ וּתְאֲנִתָּהּ
 אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָה אֶתְנָה הִמָּה לִּי
 אֲשֶׁר נָתַנּוּ־לִי מְאֵהָבֶי
 וְשִׁמְתִּים לִיעֵר
 וְאֶכְלָתֶם חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה:
 טו וּפְקַדְתִּי עָלֶיהָ
 אֶת־יָמֶי הַבָּעָלִים 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.

וְתַעַד נִזְמָה וְחִלִּיתָהּ
וְתִלְךְ אַחֲרֵי מֵאֵהָבֶיהָ
וְאֵתִי שָׁכַחָה נֹאס־יְהוָה: {ס}
לְכֵן הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִפְתִּיָּהּ טז
וְהִלַּכְתִּיהָ הַמִּדְבָּר
וְדִבַּרְתִּי עַל-לִבָּהּ:
וְנָתַתִּי לָהּ אֶת-כַּרְמֶיהָ מִשֵּׁם זי
וְאֶת-עֵמֶק עֲכֹר לִפְתַּח תְּקוּוֹה
וְעֲנָתָה שָׁמָּה כִּימִי נְעוּרֶיהָ
וּכְיוֹם עֲלוֹתָהּ מֵאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם:

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 נֹאס־יְהוָה תִּקְרָאִי אִישִׁי וְלֹא-
תִקְרָאִי-לִי עוֹד בְּעָלִי: יט וְהִסְרֹתִי אֶת-שְׁמוֹת
הַבְּעָלִים מִפִּיהָ וְלֹא-יִזְכְּרוּ עוֹד בְּשֵׁמָם: כ וְכִרְתִּי
לָהֶם בְּרִית בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עִם-חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה וְעִם-עוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְרֶמֶשׂ 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 (מִפְתִּיָּהּ), 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’ (בַּעַל – 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 בַּעַל (‘Baal’, v. 18) refers to the Canaanite god Baal himself, while the plural form הַבְּעָלִים (‘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.

אֲשַׁבֹּר מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁכַּבְתִּים לַבֵּטָח:
כא וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בַצֶּדֶק
 וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים: **כב** וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי
 בְּאַמוּנָה וַיִּדְעַת אֶת־יְהוָה: {פ}

כג וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶעֱנֶה
 נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה

אֶעֱנֶה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְהֵם יַעֲנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

כד וְהָאָרֶץ תַּעֲנֶה

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

כה וְזִרְעֵתִיהָ לִי בָאָרֶץ

וְרַחֲמֵתִי אֶת־לֹא רַחֲמָה
 וְאִמְרֵתִי לֹא־עַמִּי־אֶתָּה
 וְהוּא יֹאמַר אֱלֹהִי: {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 עָנָה ('respond'), 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: וְזִרְעֵתִיהָ (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 אֶהֱבֶה אִשָּׁה אֲהַבְתָּ רָעָה
וּמִנְאָפֶת כָּאֲהַבְתָּ יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהֵם פְּנִים
אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְאֶהְבִּי אֲשִׁישֵׁי עֲנָבִים:
ב וְאֶכְרָה לִּי בַחֲמֹשֶׁה עָשָׂר כֶּסֶף וְחֹמֶר שְׂעִירִים
וְלֶחֶד שְׂעִירִים: ג וַאֲמַר אֵלֶיהָ יָמִים רַבִּים תִּשְׁבִּי לִּי
לֹא תִזְנִי וְלֹא תִהְיִי לְאִישׁ וְגַם־אֲנִי אֶלְיָךְ: ד כִּי יָמִים
רַבִּים יֵשְׁבוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין מֶלֶךְ וְאֵין שָׂר וְאֵין זָבַח
וְאֵין מִצֵּבָה וְאֵין אֲפֹד וְתַרְפִּים: ה אַחֲרֵי יֵשְׁבוּ בְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִקְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵת דָּוִיד
מֶלֶכָם וּפָחַדּוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וְאֶל־טוֹבוֹ בְּאַחֲרִית
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 (χομορ 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

א שִׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
כִּי רִיב לַיהוָה עַם־יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ
כִּי אֵין־אַמֶּת וְאֵין־חֶסֶד
וְאֵין־דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים בָּאָרֶץ:
ב אֱלֹהִים וְכַחַשׁ
וְרָצַח וְגִנֵּב וְנָאֹף
פְּרָצוּ וְדָמִים בְּדָמִים נִגְעוּ:
ג עַל־כֵּן תֵּאָבֵל הָאָרֶץ
וְאִמְלֹל כָּל־יוֹשֵׁב בָּהּ
בְּחַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְגַם־דְּגֵי הַיָּם יֵאָסְפוּ:
ד אַךְ אִישׁ אֶל־יָרֵב וְאֶל־יֹכַח אִישׁ
וְעַמֶּךָ כַּמְרִיבִי כֹהֵן:
ה וְכָשַׁלְתָּ הַיּוֹם

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 פָּרָצוּ 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 (וְעַמֶּךָ רִיבִי כֹהֵן) – 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 עַמֶּךָ): the 2MS form 'you have destroyed' is preserved in several mediaeval Hebrew MSS and is reflected in the Vg (*nocte tacere feci matrem tuam*).

וְכָשֶׁל גַּם־נְבִיא עִמָּךָ לַיְלָה
 וְדַמִּיתִי אִמֶּךָ:
 נִדְּמוּ עָמִי מִבְּלִי הַדַּעַת ^ו
 כִּי־אַתָּה הַדַּעַת מְאַסֶּת
 וְאִמְאָסָאךָ וְאִמְאָסָךְ מִבְּהֵן לִי
 וְתִשְׁכַּח תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 אֲשַׁכַּח בְּנִיךָ גַם־אֲנִי:
 כְּרַבָּם ^ז
 כֵּן חֲטָאוּ־לִי
 כְּבוֹדָם בְּקִלְוֹן אָמִיר:
 חֲטָאת עָמִי יֹאכְלוּ ^ח
 וְאֶל־עֹנָם יִשְׂאוּ נַפְשׁוֹ:
 וְהָיָה כָּעַם כִּבְהֵן ^ט
 וּפִקְדָתִי עָלָיו דִּרְכּוֹ
 וּמַעַלְלָיו אֲשִׁיב לוֹ:
 וְאֹכְלוּ וְלֹא יִשְׂבְּעוּ ^י
 הִזְנוּ וְלֹא יִפְרְצוּ
 כִּי־אֶת־יְהוָה עָזְבוּ

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

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 אֶהְמִירוֹ 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: יֵאָזְנוּ
 וַיִּזְנוּ וַתִּירוֹשׁ יִקְח־לֵב:
 עֲמַל בַּעֲצוֹ יִשְׁאַל יב
 וּמִקְלוֹ יַגִּיד לוֹ
 כִּי רוּחַ זְנוּנִים הִתְעָה
 וַיִּזְנוּ מִתַּחַת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
 עַל־רָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים יִזְבְּחוּ יג
 וְעַל־הַגְּבְעוֹת יִקְטְרוּ
 תַּחַת אֵלוֹן וְלִבְנֶה וְאֵלֶּה
 כִּי טוֹב צֶלֶה
 עַל־כֵּן תִּזְנֶינָה בְנוֹתֵיכֶם
 וְכָלוֹתֵיכֶם תִּנְאַפְּנָה:
 לֹא־אֶפְקֹד עַל־בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִזְנֶינָה יד
 וְעַל־כָּלוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִנְאַפְּנָה
 כִּי־הֵם עִם־הַזְנוֹת יִפְרְדּוּ
 וְעִם־הַקְדָּשׁוֹת יִזְבְּחוּ וְעִם
 לֹא־יָבִין יִלְבֹּט:
 אִם־זֹנֶה אַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל טו
 אֶל־יֹאשֶׁם 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-תֵּבֹאוּ הַגִּלְגָּל וְאַל-תַּעֲלוּ בֵּית אֵוֶן

וְאַל-תִּשְׁבְּעוּ חַי־יְהוָה:

טז כִּי כָפְרָה סִרְיָה סָרָר יִשְׂרָאֵל

עֲתָה יִרְעַם יְהוָה

כְּכֶבֶשׂ בַּמֶּרְחֶב:

יז חֲבוּר עֲצָבִים אֶפְרַיִם הִנָּח-לֹו:

יח סָר סְבָאִם

הַזֵּנָה הַזֵּנוּ

אָהָבוּ הָבוּ קִלּוֹן מִגִּנְיָה:

יט צָרָר רוּחַ אוֹתָהּ בְּכִנְפֶיהָ

וַיָּבִשׁוּ מִזְבְּחוֹתֶם: {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 (φρουράματος – literally, 'neighing'), has 'Glory' (cf. v. 7).

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

הושע פרק ה

א שמעו־זאת הכהנים והקשׁיבו |
בית ישראל
ובית המלך האזינו
כי לכם המשפט
כי־פח הייתם למצפה
ורשת פרושה על־תבור:
ב ושחטה שטים העמיקו
ואני מוסר לכלם:
ג אני ידעתי אפרים
וישראל לא־נכחד ממני
כי עתה הזנית אפרים
נטמא ישראל:
ד לא יתנו מעלליהם לשוב אל־אלהיהם
כי רוח זנונים בקרבם

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' (תבור) 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' (מצפה) – 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 ושחטה השטים העמיקו: 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:		and they no longer know Yahweh.
וְעֵנָה גְאוֹן־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָנָיו	ה	5 Israel's arrogance is his accuser,
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶפְרַיִם יִכָּשְׁלוּ בְּעֵוֹנָם		Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their guilt;
כָּשַׁל גַּם־יְהוּדָה עִמָּם:		Judah too will be undone with them.
בְּצֹאֲנָם וּבְבָקָרָם	ו	6 Though, with their sheep and cattle,
יֵלְכוּ לִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה		they go in search of Yahweh,
וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּ חֵלֶץ מֵהֶם:		they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them.
בִּיהוָה בָּגְדוּ	ז	7 They have betrayed Yahweh
כִּי־בָנִים זָרִים יִלְדוּ		because they have fathered bastards;
עַתָּה יֹאכֹלֶם חֹדֶשׁ אֶת־חֲלָקֵיהֶם: {ס}		now, the new moon will devour them and their fields.
תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּגִבְעָה	ח	8 Sound the horn in Gibeah,
חֲצֹצֶרֶת בְּרָמָה		the trumpet in Ramah,
הֲרִיעוּ בֵּית אֲוֹן		raise the war cry in Beth-Aven,
אַחֲרֶיךָ בְּנֵי־מִינָן:		"We are behind you, Benjamin!"

- ⁵ The verb יִכָּשְׁלוּ ('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 כָּשַׁל 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' (אַחֲרֶיךָ) is uncertain (here following the *NJB*); perhaps it should be corrected according to the context to read 'tremble in fear' (הִתְרַדּוּ), as reflected in the *LXX* (ἐξέσθη).

ט אֶפְרַיִם לְשֹׁמֵה תִהְיֶה
בַּיּוֹם תּוֹכַחַה
בְּשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הוֹדַעְתִּי נֶאֱמָנָה:
י הִיוּ שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה כַּמְסִיגֵי גְבוּל
עֲלֵיהֶם אֶשְׁפּוֹךְ כַּמֵּים עֲבָרְתִּי:
יא עָשׂוּק אֶפְרַיִם רָצוֹן מִשֶּׁפֶט
כִּי הוֹאִיל הֵלֵךְ אַחֲרֵי־צוֹ:
יב וְאֲנִי כַעַשׁ לְאֶפְרַיִם
וְכִרְקַב לְבֵית יְהוּדָה:
יג וַיֵּרָא אֶפְרַיִם אֶת־חֻלְיוֹ
וַיהוּדָה אֶת־מִזְרוֹ
וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶפְרַיִם אֶל־אַשּׁוּר
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יֶרֶב
וְהוּא לֹא יוֹכֵל לְרַפֵּא לָכֶם

- 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

- 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 Judaeian army into Israelite territory and perhaps also to earlier encroachments by Judah (1K 15:16–22). The "Deuteronomistic 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 first 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 ἀντιδίκον 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 (צוֹ) is unintelligible.
- 12 The noun רִקְב ('rotteness') refers to wood rot caused by the ravages of worms.
- 13 'To the Great King' (אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יֶרֶב) is a conjectural translation, preserving an archaic genitive construct, as also in 10:6; the MT has 'to an avenging king' (אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יֶרֶב). 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־יִגָּהֶה מִכֶּם מְזֹזֶר׃
 כִּי אֲנֹכִי כְשַׁחֲלִי לְאַפְרַיִם יד
 וּכְכַפִּיר לְבֵית יְהוּדָה
 אֲנִי אֲנִי אֶטְרֹף וְאֶלֶךְ
 אֲשָׂא וְאֵין מַצִּיל׃
 אֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּבָה אֶל־מְקוֹמִי טו
 עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִאשְׁמוּ וּבִקְשׁוּ פָנַי
 בְּצָר לָהֶם יִשְׁחַרְנֵנִי׃

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 טָרָף
וַיִּרְפָּאֵנוּ יָד וַיַּחְבֵּשְׁנוּ:
ב יַחֲיֵנוּ מִיָּמִים
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
יִקְמְנוּ וְנַחֲיָה לִפְנָיו:
ג וְנִדְעָה נִרְדָּפָה לַדַּעַת אֶת־יְהוָה
כְּשַׁחַר נֶכּוֹן מִצֶּאֱוֹ
וַיָּבֹא כַּגֶּשֶׁם לָנוּ
כַּמֶּלֶקֶשׁ יוֹרֵה אֶרֶץ:
ד מָה אֲעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ אֶפְרַיִם
מָה אֲעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ יְהוּדָה
וַחֲסִדְכֶם כַּעֲנַן־בֹּקֶר
וְכֹטֵל מִשְׁכִּים 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 – ‘your judgements, a light comes forth’.

הֲרַגְתִּים בְּאִמְרֵי־פִי
וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ אֹר יֵצֵא:
כִּי חֶסֶד חִפְצָתִי וְלֹא־זֶבַח
וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מַעֲלֹת:
וְהֵמָּה כָּאָדָם עֲבְרוּ בְרִית
שֵׁם בִּגְדוּ בִי:
גִּלְעָד קְרִית פְּעֻלִי אֹנָן
עַקְבָּה מַדָּם:
וּכְכֹחֵי אִישׁ גְּדוּדִים חָבֵר כְּהָנִים
דֶּרֶךְ יִרְצָחוּ־שִׁכְמָה
כִּי זָמָה עָשׂוּ:
בְּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאִיתִי שַׁעֲרִירִיה שַׁעֲרוּרִיה
שֵׁם זָנוֹת לְאֶפְרַיִם
נִטְמָא יִשְׂרָאֵל:
גַּם־יְהוּדָה שֶׁת קָצִיר לָךְ
בְּשׁוּבִי שְׁבוֹת עַמִּי: {פ}

why I have killed them with words from my mouth,
why my sentence will blaze forth like the dawn.

- 6 For, faithful love is what pleases me, not sacrifice;
knowledge of God, not burnt offerings.
- 7 However, they have broken the covenant at Adam,
there they have betrayed me.
- 8 Gilead is a city of evildoers,
full of bloody footprints.
- 9 Like so many robbers in ambush,
a gang of priests commits murder on the road to Shechem –
what infamous behaviour!
- 10 In the House of Israel, I have seen a horrible thing;
there, Ephraim plays the whore,
Israel is befouled.
- 11 For you too, Judah, a harvest is in store,
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 כִּרְפָאִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
וְנִגְלָה עֹן אֶפְרַיִם
וְרַעוֹת שְׁמֶרֹן
כִּי פָעִלוּ שָׁקֶר
וְגִנֵּב יָבֹוא
פֶּשַׁט גְּדוּד בַּחוּץ:
ב וּבִלְיָאֲמָרוּ לְלִבָּם
כָּל־רַעְתָּם זִכְרָתִי
עַתָּה סִבְבוּם מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם
ג נִגַּד פָּנֵי הָיוֹ:
בְּרַעְתָּם יִשְׁמַחוּ־מֶלֶךְ
וּבִכְחָשֵׁיהֶם שָׂרִים:
ד כָּל־מִנְאֵפִים
כָּמוֹ תִנּוֹר בַּעֲרָה מֵאֵפָה
יִשְׁבּוֹת מֵעִיר מְלוּשׁ בָּצֵק עַד־חֲמֻצָּתוֹ:
ה יוֹם מִלְּכָנוּ
הִחֲלוּ שָׂרִים חֲמַת מִיָּין

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' (מִנְאֵפִים), 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' (מִלְכָנוּ), some suggest 'their king' (מִלְכָם), following the Tg.

מִשְׁךְ יָדוֹ אֶת־לִצְצִים: ^ו כִּי־קָרְבוֹ כִּתְנוֹר
לִבָּם בְּאֶרְבִּם
כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה יִשָּׁן אִפְהֶם
בֹּקֶר הוּא בָּעַר כָּאֵשׁ לְהִבֶּה:
כֻּלָּם יַחְמוּ כִּתְנוֹר ^ז
וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־שֹׁפְטֵיהֶם
כָּל־מַלְכֵיהֶם נָפְלוּ
אִין־קָרָא בָהֶם אֵלֵי:
אֶפְרַיִם בְּעַמִּים הוּא יִתְבּוֹלֵל ^ח
אֶפְרַיִם הִיָּה עֵגֶה בְּלִי הַפּוּכָה:
אָכְלוּ זָרִים כֹּחוֹ ^ט
וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע
גַּם־שִׁיבָה זָרָקָה
בּוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע:
וְעֵנָה גְאוֹן־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּפְנֵיו ^י
וְלֹא־שָׁבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
וְלֹא בִקְשׂוּ בְּכָל־זֹאת:
וַיְהִי אֶפְרַיִם כִּיּוֹנָה פוֹתָה אֵין לָב ^{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 (אִפְהֶם); the MT has 'their baker' (אֶפְהֶם).

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 (ἰσχύς), 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.

מִצָּרִים קָרְאוּ אֲשׁוּר הִלְכוּ:
 כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ אֶפְרוּשׁ עֲלֵיהֶם רֶשֶׁתִּי יב
 כְּעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם אוֹרִידֵם
 אִיסִּירֵם כְּשִׁמְעַתָּם: {ס}
 אוֹי לָהֶם כִּי־נָדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי יג
 שָׂד לָהֶם כִּי־פָשְׁעוּ בִּי
 וְאֲנֹכִי אֶפְדֵּם
 וְהֵמָּה דִּבְרוּ עָלַי כְּזָבִים:
 וְלֹא־זָעְקוּ אֵלַי בְּלִבָּם יד
 כִּי יִלְּלוּ עַל־מַשְׁכָּבוֹתָם
 עַל־דָּגָן וְתִירוֹשׁ יִתְגֹּרְרוּ
 יִסְּרוּ בִּי:
 וְאֲנִי יִסְרֹתִי חֲזָקָתִי זְרוּעֹתַם טו
 וְאֵלַי יִחְשְׁבוּ־רָע:
 יִשׁוּבוּ | 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 (ἐλπίσεως αὐτῶν) and NJB; the MT (כְּשִׁמְעַתָּם) and NRSV have 'according to the report made to their assembly'. The NJB drops כְּשִׁמְעַתָּם ('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' (יִתְגֹּרְרוּ). 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

א אֶל-חֶכֶךְ שֹׁפֵר
כַּנָּשֵׁר עַל-בֵּית יְהוָה
יַעַן עֲבָרוּ בְרִיתִי
וְעַל-תּוֹרַתִי פָשְׁעוּ:
לִי יִזְעֻקוּ
ב אֱלֹהֵי יִדְעֻנוּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ג זָנַח יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹב
אֹיֵב יִרְדָּפוּ:
ד הֵם הִמְלִיכוּ וְלֹא מִמְּנִי
הַשִּׁירוּ וְלֹא יִדְעֹתִי
כַּסְפָּם וְזָהָבָם
עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֲצָבִים
לְמַעַן יִכָּרֶת:
ה זָנַח עֲגֻלָּךְ שִׁמְרֹון
חָרָה אַפִּי 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' (נֶשֶׁךְ) 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'.

כִּי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהוּא חֲרָשׁ עָשָׂהוּ וְלֹא אֱלֹהִים הוּא כִּי־שִׁבְבִים יִהְיֶה עֵגֶל שִׁמְרוֹן: כִּי רוּחַ יִזְרְעוּ וְסוּפָתָה יִקְצְרוּ קִמָּה אֵין־לֹו צֶמַח בְּלִי יַעֲשֶׂה־קֶמַח אוּלִי יַעֲשֶׂה זָרִים יִבְלַעְהוּ: נִבְלַע יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲתָה הֵיוּ בַּגּוֹלִים כְּכֹלִי אֵין־חֶפֶץ בּוֹ: כִּי־הִמָּה עָלוּ אַשּׁוּר פָּרָא בּוֹדֵד לוֹ אֶפְרַיִם הִתְנֹו אֲהָבִים: גַּם כִּי־יִתְּנוּ בַּגּוֹלִים עֲתָה אֶקְבְּצֵם וַיַּחֲלוּ מָעַט	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!
	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.
	ח	8 Israel has himself been swallowed; now, they are lost among the nations like something no one wants.
	ט	9 For, they have approached Assyria – like a wild donkey, all alone. Ephraim has rented lovers.
	י	10 Because they bargain with the nations, I am now going to round them up; soon, they will writhe

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:
 כִּי־הִרְבֵּה אֲפָרִים מִזְבְּחֹת לַחֹטָא יא
 הַיּוֹלֵוּ מִזְבְּחֹת לַחֹטָא:
 אֲכַתּוּב אֶכְתָּב־לּוֹ רַבּוֹ רַבִּי תוֹרָתִי יב
 כְּמוֹ־זֶר נִחְשְׁבוּ:
 זִבְחֵי הַבְּהֵמָה יִזְבְּחוּ בָשָׂר וַיֹּאכְלוּ יג
 יְהוֹה לֹא רָצָם
 עֲתָה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם
 וַיִּפְקֹד חַטֹּאוֹתָם
 הֵמָּה מִצְרַיִם יָשׁוּבוּ:
 וַיִּשְׁכַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עֲשֹׂהוּ יד
 וַיִּבֶן הַיְכָלוֹת וַיהוּדָה
 הִרְבֵּה עָרִים בְּצֻרוֹת
 וַשְּׁלַח־תִּי־אֵשׁ בְּעָרָיו
 וַאֲכָלָה אֶרְמֹנֶיהָ: {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' (τρυμῆνη) in place of 'palaces' and 'foundations' (θεμελίαι) in place of 'citadels'.

הושע פרק ט

א אֶל־תְּשׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל |
אֶל־גִּיל כְּעַמִּים
כִּי זָנִיתָ מֵעַל אֱלֹהֶיךָ
אָהַבְתָּ אֶת־נָנִי עַל כָּל־גָּרְנוֹת דָּגָן:
ב גָּרֶן וַיִּקֶּב לֹא יִרְעֶם
וְתִירוֹשׁ יִכְחַשׁ בָּהּ:
ג לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ יְהוָה
וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם
וּבְאֲשׁוּר טָמֵא יֹאכְלוּ:
ד לֹא־יִסְכּוּ לַיהוָה | יֵין
וְלֹא יִעֲרְבוּ־לוֹ
זִבְחֵיהֶם 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.

כִּי־הִנֵּה הִלְכוּ מִשָּׂד	ו	6	What a scene of devastation they have left!
מִצָּרִים תִּקְבְּצֵם מִן תְּקַבְּרֵם			Egypt will round them up, Memphis will bury them,
מִחֲמַד לִכְסָפָם			nettles will inherit their fields
קִמּוֹשׁ יִירָשׁם חֹוֶחַ בְּאֶהְלֵיהֶם:			and thorn bushes invade their homesteads.
בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַפְּקָדָה	ז	7	The days of punishment have come,
בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַשָּׁלֵם			the days of retribution are here;
יָדְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל			Israel knows it!
אֲוִיל הַנְּבִיא מִשְׁגַּע אִישׁ הָרוּחַ			"The prophet is mad and the inspired man a fool!"
עַל רֹב עֲוֹנָךְ			Great has been your guilt –
וְרַבָּה מִשְׁטָמָה:			all the greater, then, the hostility!
צִפָּה אֶפְרַיִם עִם־אֱלֹהֵי	ח	8	The watchman of Ephraim is with my God:
נְבִיא פֶחַ יִקוֹשׁ			it is the prophet –
עַל־כָּל־דֶּרֶכָיו מִשְׁטָמָה			and a fowler's trap is placed on all his paths;
בְּבֵית אֱלֹהָיו:			and, in the shrine of his God, there is enmity towards him.
הָעַמִּיקוּ שְׁחָתוֹ	ט	9	They have become deeply corrupt
כִּימֵי הַגִּבְעָה			as in the days of Gibeah;
יִזְכּוֹר עֲוֹנָם			he will remember their guilt
יִפְקֹד חַטֹּאתֵם: {ס}			and he will punish their sins.

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 Ἰσραὴλ).

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).

כַּעֲנַבִּים בַּמִּדְבָּר מֵצֵאתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 כַּכְּבוֹרָה בְּתֹאנָה בְּרֹאשִׁיתָהּ
 רָאִיתִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם
 הָמָּה בָּאוּ בְּעַל-פְּעוֹר
 וַיִּנְזְרוּ לַבִּשְׁת
 וַיְהִיו שְׁקוּצִים כְּאַהֲבָם:
 אֲפֹרִים כְּעוֹף יִתְעוֹפֵף כְּבוֹדָם
 מִלֵּדָה וּמִבֶּטֶן וּמִהָרִיוֹן:
 כִּי אִם-יִגְדְּלוּ אֶת-בְּנֵיהֶם
 וְשָׁפְלִיתִם מֵאֲדָם
 כִּי-גַם-אֲזִי לָהֶם
 בְּשׁוּרֵי מָהֶם:
 אֲפֹרִים כַּאֲשֶׁר-רָאִיתִי לְצוֹר שְׂתוּלָה בְּנוֹה
 וְאֲפֹרִים לְהוֹצִיא אֶל-הָרֶג בָּנָיו:
 תִּן-לָהֶם יְהוָה מִהַתֵּתָן
 תִּן-לָהֶם רַחֵם מִשְׁפָּל
 וְשָׁדִים צְמָקִים:

- 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.

- 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 **מִן** 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' (**θήραν**) instead of 'Tyre' (**צוֹר**).
- 14 The literal translation of 'dried up breasts' is 'breasts that shrivel up dry'.

טו כָּל־רָעָתָם בַּגִּלְגָּל
 כִּי־שֵׁם שְׂנֵאתִים
 עַל רָע מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם
 מִבֵּיתִי אֶגְרָשׁם
 לֹא אוֹסֵף אֶהְבֶּתָם
 כָּל־שָׂרֵיהֶם סֹרְרִים:
 טז הִכָּה אֶפְרַיִם שָׂרֵשׁם יָבֵשׁ
 פָּרִי בְלִי בִלְיַעֲשׂוֹן
 גַּם כִּי יֵלְדוּן
 וְהִמַּתִּי מִחֲמַדֵּי בֶטֶן:
 יז יִמְאַסֵּם אֱלֹהֵי כִי לֹא שָׁמְעוּ לוֹ
 וַיְהִיו נִדְדִים בַּגּוֹיִם: {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 בֹקֶק יִשְׂרָאֵל
פְּרִי יְשׁוּהָ-לּוֹ
כָּרֵב לְפָרִיו
הִרְבֵּה לְמִזְבְּחוֹת
כְּטוֹב לְאֶרְצוֹ
הִיטִיבוּ מַצְבּוֹת:
ב חֶלֶק לִבָּם
עָתָה יֵאָשְׁמוּ
הוּא יַעֲרֹף מִזְבְּחוֹתָם
יִשְׁדֹּד מַצְבּוֹתָם:
ג כִּי עָתָה יֹאמְרוּ אֵין מֶלֶךְ לָנוּ
כִּי לֹא יֵרְאֵנוּ
אֶת־יְהוָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־יַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּנוּ:
ד דְּבָרוּ דְּבָרִים
אֱלֹת שׁוֹא כָרַת בְּרִית
וּפְרַח כָּרַאשׁ מִשְׁפָּט
עַל תִּלְמֵי 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).

ה לַעֲגֹלוֹת בֵּית אֵוֶן יִגְוְרוּ שְׁבֵן שִׁמְרוֹן
 כִּי־אֲבֵל עָלָיו עֲמֹו
 וּכְמָרְיוֹ עָלָיו יִגִּילוּ
 עַל־כְּבוֹדֹו כִּי־גָלָה מִמֶּנּוּ:
 ו גַּם־אוֹתוֹ לְאַשּׁוּר יוֹבֵל
 מִנְחָה לְמֶלֶךְ יֶרֶב
 בַּשָּׁנָה אֶפְרַיִם יִקַּח
 וַיִּבּוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲצָתוֹ:
 ז נִדְמָה שִׁמְרוֹן
 מֶלֶכָה כְּקֶצֶף עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם:
 ח וַנִּשְׁמְדוּ בַמּוֹת אֵוֶן
 חֲטָאֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹץ וְדֶרֶדֶר
 יַעֲלֶה עַל־מִזְבְּחוֹתֵם
 וְאָמְרוּ לְהָרִים כִּסּוּנוֹ
 וּלְגִבְעוֹת נִפְלוּ עָלֵינוּ: {פ}
 ט מִימֵי הַגִּבְעָה חֲטָאֵת
 יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶשֶׁם עֲמָדוֹ

- 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!
- 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.
- 7 Samaria's king shall perish,
like a twig drifting on the water.
- 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!"
- 9 Since the days of Gibeah, Israel, you have sinned.
There, they have taken their stand,

5 'Calf' follows the LXX (μῶσχα) and Peshitta; the MT has 'calves' (לַעֲגֹלוֹת).

6 'Great King' is a conjectural translation (מֶלֶךְ יֶרֶב); the MT has 'King Jarev' (מֶלֶךְ יֶרֶב = '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') occurs only here in the OT. Historically, it has been understood in two different ways: 1 'foam', as Vg (*spumam*), Aquila, and Symmachus; and 2 'snapped-off twig', as LXX (*φρῦγαρον*), Theodotion and the Peshitta. Both make sense in the light of the simile.

8 For 'high places of Aven', here following the MT (בַּמּוֹת אֵוֶן), NJB & NRSV, several MSS read בַּמּוֹת בֵּית אֵוֶן ('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' (בֵּית) 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 עֲלֹזָה:

בְּאוֹתֵי וְאִסְרֶם

וְאִסְפוּ עֲלֵיהֶם עַמִּים

בְּאִסְרֶם לִשְׁתֵּי עֵינֵתָם עֹנֹתָם:

וְאִפְרַיִם עֲגֹלָה מִלְמָדָה יֵא

אֶהְבֵּתִי לְדֹשׁ

וְאֲנִי עֲבָרְתִּי

עַל־טוֹב צִנּוּרָה

אֲרָכִיב אִפְרַיִם יַחְרוֹשׁ יְהוּדָה

יִשְׁדָּד־לֹו יַעֲקֹב:

זֶרְעוּ לָכֶם לַצִּדְקָה קַצְרוּ לְפִי־חֶסֶד יב

גִּירוּ לָכֶם גֵּיר

וְעַתָּה לְדָרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה

עַד־יָבֹוא וִירָה צֶדֶק לָכֶם:

חֲרַשְׁתֶּם־רָשָׁע עֹלָתָה קִצְרַתֶּם יג

אָכַלְתֶּם פְּרִי־כַחַשׁ

כִּי־בִטַּחְתֶּם 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 (παιδεύσαι αὐτούς), the MT reads וְאִסְרֶם ('I will bind'); the LXX reflects איסרם, involving orthographic confusion between י & א and metathesis of the two letters. In place of 'crimes', here following the Qere (עֹנֹתָם), the Ketiv has 'eyes' (עֵינֵתָם).

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 שָׁאוֹן בְּעַמּוֹךְ ^ד
 וְכָל-מִבְצָרָיֶךָ יוֹשֵׁד
 כְּשֵׁד שְׁלֹמֹן בֵּית אַרְבָּאֵל בְּיוֹם מִלְחָמָה
 אִם עַל-בָּנִים רָטְשָׁה:
 כָּכָה עָשָׂה לָכֶם בֵּית-אֵל ^ט
 מִפְּנֵי רָעַת רַעְתֵּכֶם
 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 לְבָנִי:
ב קָרָאוּ לָהֶם
בֶּן הַלְכוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם לְבַעֲלִים יִזְבְּחוּ
וּלְפִסְלִים יִקְטְרוּ;
ג וְאֲנִי תִרְגַּלְתִּי לְאֶפְרַיִם
קָחַם עַל־זְרוּעֵתִי
וְלֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי רַפְּאֵתִים:
ד בַּחֲבֵלֵי אָדָם אֲמַשְׁכֵּם בַּעֲבָתוֹת אֶהְבֶּה
וְאֶהְיֶה לָּהֶם כְּמִרְיָמִי עַל עַל לְחִיָּהֶם
וְאֵט אֲלִיוֹ אוֹכִיל:
ה לֹא יָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וְאַשׁוּר הוּא מֶלֶכוֹ
כִּי מֵאֲנוּ 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 בָּנִי ('my son'), here following the MT, the LXX (τέκνα αὐτοῦ, 'his sons') reflects בָּנָיו; 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' – 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' (לֹא) 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 לוֹ ('to him').

וַחֲלָה חֶרֶב בְּעָרָיו וּכְלָתָה בְּדָיו וְאָכְלָה מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם:	ו	6	The sword will rage through his cities, destroying the bars of his gates, devouring them because of their schemes.
וְעַמִּי תְלוּאִים לְמִשׁוּבָתִי וְאֶל-עַל יִקְרָאָהוּ יַחַד לֹא יִרְוּמָם:	ז	7	My people are bent on disregarding me; if they are summoned to come up, not one of them makes a move.
אֵיךְ אֶתְנֶנְךָ אֶפְרַיִם אֲמַגִּנְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵיךְ אֶתְנֶנְךָ כַּאֲדָמָה אֲשִׁימְךָ כְּצִבְאִים נִהְפֶּךָ עָלַי לְבִי יַחַד נִכְמְרוּ נַחוּמִי:	ח	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.
לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה חֶרֶן אִפִּי לֹא אָשׁוּב לְשַׁחַת אֶפְרַיִם כִּי אֵל אֲנִכִּי וְלֹא-אִישׁ בְּקִרְבְּךָ קָדוֹשׁ וְלֹא אָבוֹא בְּעִיר:	ט	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.

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.

אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה יֵלְכוּ י
 כְּאַרְיֵה יִשְׁאַג
 כִּי־הוּא יִשְׁאַג
 וַיִּחַרְדּוּ בָנִים מִיָּם:
 יִחַרְדּוּ כְּצִפּוֹר מִמִּצְרַיִם יא
 וּכְיוֹנָה מֵאַרְץ אֲשׁוּר
 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 סִבְבֵּנִי בְּכַחַשׁ אֶפְרַיִם
וּבְמִרְמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיהוּדָה עַד רֹד עִם-אֵל
וְעִם-קְדוֹשִׁים נְאֻמָּן:
ב אֶפְרַיִם רָעָה רוּחַ
וְרֹדֵף קָדִים כָּל-הַיּוֹם
כִּזְבֹּ וּשְׂדֵי יִרְבֵּה
וּבְרִית עִם-אַשּׁוּר יִכְרְתוּ
וְשִׁמֹּן לְמִצְרַיִם יוֹבֵל:
ג וְרִיב לִיהוָה עִם-יְהוּדָה
וּלְפָקֵד עַל-יַעֲקֹב כְּדָרְכָיו
כַּמַּעֲלָלִיו יֵשִׁיב לוֹ:
ד בְּבֶטֶן עֶקֶב 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 ἔρχω 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'.

וַיִּשְׂר אֶל־מִלְאָךְ וַיִּכָּל בָּכָה וַיִּתְחַנֵּן־לּוֹ בֵּית־אֵל יִמְצְאוּנוּ וְשָׁם יִדְבַר עִמָּנוּ:	ה	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.
וַיְהִי הָאֱלֹהִי הַצְבָּאוֹת יְהוָה זָכְרוֹ:	ו	6	Yes, Yahweh, God Sabaoth, Yahweh is his title!
וְאַתָּה בִּאלֹהֶיךָ תָּשׁוּב חֶסֶד וּמִשְׁפָּט שִׁמְרָה וְקוֹה אֶל־אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּמְיֵד:	ז	7	Therefore, turn back with God's help, maintain faithful love and loyalty and wait eagerly for your God.
כְּנֻעַן בִּידּוֹ מֵאֲזַנִּי מִרְמָה לְעֶשֶׂק אֶהְבֵּ:	ח	8	Merchants use fraudulent scales: to defraud is his delight.
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶפְרַיִם אֵךְ עָשִׂיתִי מִצָּאתִי אֲזֵן לִי כָּל־יִגְיעִי לֹא יִמְצְאוּ־לִי עֹן אֲשֶׁר־חָטָא:	ט	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.
וְאַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם	י	10	I have been Yahweh your God since your days in Egypt

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 וְקוֹה (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 אוֹשִׁיבֶךָ בָּאֵהָלִים כִּימִי מוֹעֵד: וּדְבַרְתִּי עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים וְאַנְכִי חֲזוֹן הַרְבֵּיתִי וּבִיד הַנְּבִיאִים אֲדַמָּה: אִם־גִּלְעָד אֲנִי אֶדְשָׁא הִיוּ בְּגִלְגָל שׁוֹרִים זִבְחוֹ גַם מִזִּבְחוֹתֶם כְּגָלִים עַל תַּלְמֵי שָׂדֵי: וַיִּבְרַח יַעֲקֹב שָׂדֵה אָרָם וַיַּעֲבֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאִשָּׁה וּבְאִשָּׁה שָׁמֵר: וּבְנִבְיָא הָעֵלָה יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם וּבְנִבְיָא נִשְׁמָר: הַכְּעִיס אֶפְרַיִם תַּמְרוּרִים וְדָמָיו עָלָיו יִטּוֹשׁ וְחִרְפָּתוֹ יָשִׁיב לוֹ אֲדָנָיו:	א ב ג ד טו
and will make you live in tents again as in the days of Meeting. I will speak through prophets; I will give vision after vision; and, through the prophets, will speak in parables. 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. Jacob fled to the countryside of Aram; Israel served to win a wife, to win a wife he looked after sheep. By a prophet Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt and a prophet guarded Israel. Ephraim bitterly provoked him – Yahweh will bring his bloodshed down on him; his Lord will repay him for his insult.	11 12 13 14 15

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 שָׁמֵר ('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

א כְּדַבֵּר אֶפְרַיִם רָתַתְּ
נִשְׂאָה הוּא בִּישְׂרָאֵל
וַיֵּאשֶׁם בַּבַּעַל וַיָּמָת׃
ב וַעֲתָהּ יִסְכְּפוּ לַחֲטָא
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מַסֵּכָה מִכֶּסֶּפֶם כְּתַבּוּנָם עֲצָבִים
מַעֲשֵׂה חֲרָשִׁים כְּלָה
לָהֶם הֵם אֲמָרִים
זִבְחֵי אָדָם
עֲגֻלִּים יִשְׁקֹון׃
ג לָכֵן יִהְיוּ כַעֲנַן־בֹּקֶר
וְכַטָּל מְשָׁכִים הַלֵּךְ
כַּמֶּזֶל יִסְעֶר מִגֶּרֶן
וְכַעֲשָׁן מֵאַרְבָּה׃
ד וְאַנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וְאֱלֹהִים זִוְלָתִי לֹא תָדַע
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ אֵין בְּלָתִי׃

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 ἀτίζων γῆν, οὗ αἱ
χεῖρες ἔκτισαν πᾶσαν τὴν στρατιὰν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οὐ παρέδωξά
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

ה אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר
 בָּאָרֶץ תְּלָאֲבוֹת:
 ו כִּמְרֻעֵי־תֶם וַיִּשְׂבְּעוּ שְׂבִעוֹ
 וַיִּרְם לִבָּם
 עַל־כֵּן שָׁכַחוּנִי:
 ז וְאֵהִי לָהֶם כְּמוֹ־שֹׁחַל
 כְּנֹמֵר עַל־דֶּרֶךְ אֲשׁוּר:
 ח אֶפְגֹּשֶׁם כְּדָב שִׁפּוֹל
 וְאֶקְרַע סִגּוֹר לִבָּם
 וְאֶכְלֶם שֵׁם כְּלָבִיא
 ט חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה תִּבְקַעֵם:
 כִּי־בִי בָעֲזָרְךָ:
 י אֵהִי מֶלֶכְךָ אֲפֹא
 וַיִּשְׁעֶךָ בְּכָל־עָרֶיךָ
 וְשִׁפְטִיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ
 תִּנְהַלֵּי מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים:

- 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"?

σοι αὐτὰ τοῦ πορεύεσθαι ὀπίσω αὐτῶν· καὶ ἐγὼ ἀνῆγαγον 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 ἐποίησαίνόν 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 וְאֵהִי ('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, with 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'.

יא אֶתְּנֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ בְּאַפִּי
 וְאֶקַּח בְּעִבְרָתִי: {פ}
 יב צָרוּר עֹון אֶפְרַיִם
 צָפוּנָה חֲטָאתוֹ:
 יג חֲבִלֵי יוֹלְדָה יָבֹאוּ לוֹ
 הוּא־בֶן לֹא חָכָם
 כִּי־עַתָּה לֹא־יַעֲמִיד בְּמִשְׁבֵּר בָּנִים:
 יד מִיַּד שְׂאוֹל אֶפְדֵם
 מִמּוֹת אֲנָאִלִם
 אֱהִי דְבָרֶיךָ מוֹת
 אֱהִי קִטְבֹךְ שְׂאוֹל נָחַם
 יִסְתֵּר מֵעֵינַי:
 טו כִּי הוּא בֵּין אֲחִים יִפְרִיא
 יְבֹא קָדִים רוּחַ יְהוָה מִמִּדְבָּר עָלָהּ
 וַיְבֹשׂ מְקוֹרוֹ וַיַּחַרֵּב מְעִינֹו
 הוּא יִשְׁסֶה
 אוֹצֵר כָּל־כֶּלִי חֲמֹדָה:

- 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.

- 11 The prefix-conjugation verb אֶתְּנֶן ('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 עֹון 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 διασσελεῖ), Peshitta & Vg (Quia ipse inter fratres dividet) read, "He causes division between brothers."

הושע פרק יד

א תֹּאשֵׁם שְׁמֶרֶן
כִּי מָרְתָה בִּאלֹהֶיהָ
בַּחֶרֶב יִפְּלוּ עַל־לִבָּהֶם יִרְטְשׁוּ
וְהָרִיתִיו יִבְקְעוּ:
{פ}
ב שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעֹגֶיךָ:
ג קַח חֶמְדְּךָ דְּבָרִים
וּשְׁבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה
אִמְרוּ אֵלָיו
כִּלְתִּישָׂא עֹן וְקַח־טוֹב
וְנִשְׁלַמָּה פָּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ:
ד אֲשׁוּר | לֹא יוֹשִׁיעֵנו
עַל־סוֹס לֹא נִרְפָּב
וְלֹא־נֹאמַר עוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ
לְמַעַשֵׂה יַדֵּינוּ אֲשֶׁר־בָּךְ יִרְחַם יְתוֹם:
ה אֲרַפָּא מְשׁוּבָתָם

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.

אֶהְבֶּם נְדָבָה
 כִּי שָׁב אָפִי מִמֶּנּוּ:
 אֶהְיֶה כִּטֹּל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
 יִפְרַח כְּשׁוֹשַׁנָּה
 וַיִּדְ שָׁרְשָׁיו כְּלִבְנוֹן:
 יֵלְכוּ יִנְקוּתָיו וַיְהִי
 כְּזֵית הַדֹּד
 וְרִיחַ לֹו כְּלִבְנוֹן:
 יֵשְׁבוּ יֹשְׁבֵי בְצֵלוֹ יַחֲיוּ
 דָגָן וַיִּפְרְחוּ כִגְפֵן
 זָכְרוּ כִיֵּן לִבְנוֹן:
 אִפְרַיִם מִה־לִּי עוֹד לְעֵצִים
 אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי וְאֲשׁוּרֵנוּ
 אֲנִי כְּבוֹדֶשׁ רַעֲנָן מִמֶּנִּי
 פֶּרִיָךְ נִמְצָא:
 מִי חָכֵם וַיִּבֶן אֱלֹהִים
 נִבּוֹן וַיֵּדְעֵם
 כִּי־יִשְׁרָאֵל דְּרָכֵי יְהוָה

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

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 καὶ καθύπερθε αὐτοῦ κατέπηγαν 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.