

THE MINOR PROPHETS

The
Prophecy of
HOSEA

Compiled by

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For Bible Marking and Class Study

over 300 yrs. ahead of time.
 prophets necessary: priests should
 have been, 48 cit. = prophet "bubble
 up". 2 Pet. 1:19-21, Heb. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:10-12.
 Isa. 22:1; Act. 3:22; 13:13; Heb. 11:32; 1 Sam. 3:2-3;

2 Chron. 11:13-17; 2 Chron. 8-9

There are twelve short prophecies, beginning with Hosea and concluding with Malachi, known as the minor prophets. These short prophecies are called the minor prophets only because of their size and not because of their content. They deal with the same major issues as the major prophets.

- I. Order and time in which the twelve minor prophets flourished.
 1. Jonah prophesied between 823 B.C. and 783 B.C. in the reign of Jeroboam II, King of Israel. (2 Kg. 14:25)
 2. Amos prophesied from about 823 B.C. to about 785 B.C. in the reign of Uzziah, King of Judah, and in that of Jeroboam II, King of Israel. (Amos 1:11)
 3. Hosea prophesied from about 809 B.C. to about 698 B.C. in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, and in that of Jeroboam II, King of Israel. (Hosea 1:1)
 4. Micah prophesied between 757 B.C. and 698 B.C. in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah. (Micah 1:1)
 5. Nahum is supposed to have prophesied between 720 B.C. and 698 B.C. in the reign of Hezekiah.
 6. Joel is supposed to have prophesied between 697 B.C. and 660 B.C. in the reign of Manasseh.
 7. Zephaniah prophesied between 640 B.C. and 609 B.C. in the reign of Josiah. (Zephaniah 1:1)
 8. Habakkuk is thought to have prophesied between 606 B.C. and 598 B.C. in the reign of Jehoiakim.
 9. Obadiah prophesied soon after 587 B.C. between the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the destruction of the Edomites by the same prince.
 10. Haggai prophesied about 520 B.C. after the return from Babylon. (Haggai 1:1)
 11. Zechariah prophesied from 520 B.C. to about 518 B.C. and was contemporary with Haggai. (see Zechariah 1:1)
 12. Malachi is generally believed to have prophesied about 436 B.C.
- II. Writer of this prophecy - Hosea
 1. All that is known of him is what is given in this prophecy.
- III. The Time of this prophecy
 1. Days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; and in the Days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel. (Hosea 1:1)
 2. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom, and contemporary with Amos - contemporary in Judah with Micah and Isaiah. His ministry extended over one-half of a century, and he lived to see the fulfillment of his prophecy in the captivity of Israel.

Hosea = 900th
= breacher - critical

Hosea = calf worship

righteous = will of Israel

mercy
strong love =

IV. The theme of the prophecy

1. "Return unto the Lord" (Hosea 6:1) ^{mercy} ^{strong} ^{love =} ^{positive & emotional}
 - a. "Return" occurs 15 times.
2. What Jeremiah was to Judah at the time of the captivity of the Southern Kingdom, Hosea was to Israel, over a century before, at the time of the captivity of the Northern Kingdom.
3. Hosea was commanded to marry a harlot. He married Gomer, and she bore him two sons and a daughter. Soon after this she played the harlot again and Hosea put her out of his home. God commanded Hosea to go and take this unfaithful woman, and take her back into his home and to love her again. This was to prepare Hosea to speak for God to Israel. God says. "Israel has played the harlot, but I love her and will yet bring her back into her homeland."

V. Outline of prophecy

1. Chapter 1 - Marriage of Hosea and Gomer, the harlot.
2. Chapter 2 - Gomer proves faithless.
3. Chapter 3 - Hosea commanded to take Gomer again
4. Chapters 4 - 5 - Israel played the harlot.
5. Chapters 6 - 8 - The love of the Lord for them
6. Chapters 9:1 - 13:8 - Israel continued to play the harlot
7. Chapters 13:9 - 14:9 - The Lord will yet receive Israel and they will return.

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION OF "HOSEA"

Verse 1 "The word of the Lord" - Not a matter of surmise or an expression of his own opinion. It was and is the authoritative Word of God.

"Hosea, the son of Beer" - Hosea, Oshea, Osee, Hoshea - "Jehovah is help or 'salvation.'

"In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel" - This would mean that Hosea prophesied during the course of 66 years from 790 B.C. - 724 B.C. Eight years in the reign of Uzziah, the whole reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, three years in the reign of Hezekiah.

Verse 2 "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea" - The prophet's work properly begins here.

"A wife of whoredoms" - That is a wife from among the Israelites who were remarkable for spiritual fornication or idolatry.

God calls Himself the husband of Israel; and this nation owed Him the fidelity of a wife - Ex. 34:15; Deut. 31:16; Judges 2:17; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:20; 31:32; Ezek. 16:17; 23:5,27; Hos. 2:5; Rev. 17:1,2.

By this act God actually says - Go, join thyself in marriage to one of those who have committed fornication against me, and raise up children who by the power of example will themselves swerve to idolatry. (Hos. 5:7)

H. 11/1-6
5:4
4:6

4. evil life -
2:8
lewis 4:2

11:200
2:8
204. 50. 1-7; 11:10

Verse 3 "He went and took Gomer" - This was a real transaction even though it had a typical meaning. To take an Israelite was to take an idolatress -- one who had worshipped the calves of Jeroboam at Dan or at Bethel.

We too can become idolators by worship of the golden calf or things of the world.

Verse 4 "Call his name Jezreel" - Jezreel means 'God will sow.' This seems to intimate that a dispersion or sowing of Israel is about to take place.

Fulfilled literally under Shalmaneser, King of Assyria (2 Kg. 17:5,6)

Word also refers to a city where Jehu slew Jezebel and all the children of Ahab (2 Kg. 9:10,36; 10:6)

This is just one of the prophetic names we so often meet in Scripture, such as 'Japheth' means 'let him enlarge or he that persuades.' Most of the nations springing from him reappear in the end time period under Gog. (Eze. 38:39) 'Abraham' - 'the father of a multitude.' 'Israel' - 'He striveth with God or ruling with God', name given to Jacob at Jabbok (Gen. 32:28). Also stands for multitudinous Israel (Gen. 34:7; John 1:47). 'Judah' - 'object of praise or praise of the Lord' (Gen. 29:35; Num. 26:19-21; 1 Chron. 2:3-6).

"The blood of Jezreel" - not Jehu's vengeance on Ahab's family, but his acts of cruelty while he resided in Jezreel, a city in the tribe of Issachar, (Josh. 19:18) where the Kings of Israel had a palace (1 Kg. 21:1)

It was at Jezreel that the house of Jehu had been established upon the throne of Israel by bloodshed (2 Kg. 10:11). Elisha had apparently commended the deed (2 Kg. 9:7) as a just punishment of the house of Ahab for the blood shed by Jezreel.

The name, Jezreel, as borne by Hosea's child, was at once a reminder of the bloodshed for which punishment was about to come and a prophecy of the fact that it was to be at Jezreel that the punishment would take place.

"Will cause to cease the kingdom" - either relating to the cutting of the Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians or to the ceasing of the Kingdom of Israel from the house of Jehu (2 Kg. 10:30) and which was fulfilled (2 Kg. 15:10).

Verse 5 "I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel" - Valley of Jezreel separates Galilee and Samaria. Jezreel is at one end and Megiddo at the other. Armageddon derived from Hebrew words Har Meghiddo, i.e. hill of Megiddo.

Israel suffered defeat in this valley by the Assyrians, but Israel's stubbornness will be broken here at Armageddon and they will be forced to accept Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 "Call her Lo-ruhamah" - Hosea's second child (Hebrew meaning) 'not having obtained mercy.' Explanation given immediately - 'For I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away' (Amos 8:2). This of course, speaks of the total destruction of the kingdom.

Verse 7 "But I will have mercy on the house of Judah" - I will spare them as a kingdom after Israel has been carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.

"And will save them by the Lord their God" - Remarkably fulfilled in the supernatural defeat of the army of the Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35).

"Will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen" - God saves by His own power - that the heathen might know that He is God. Gideon --Jud. 7; Sisera--Jud. 4; Future--Eze. 38:17-23.

Verse 9 "Call his name Lo-ammi" - not my people.

Hosea immediately explains - 'Ye are not my people and I will not be your God.' These words do not mean that God was fed up with Israel. Israel had so paganized her life as to create a condition in which the spiritual affinity between herself and God was broken. The possibility of restoration was open to her as it is to us.

'Let the wicked forsake his way' - Isaiah 55:7; Psa. 103:10; Psa. 86:15; Jonah 3:1; Eph. 3:20.

Verse 10 "Yet the number of the children of Israel" - future glory - as the sand of the sea, Gen. 32:12 (natural); Gen. 13:16 (natural); dust of the earth, Gen. 15:5 stars of heaven (spiritual) to shine as lights, Micah 4:7-8; Eze. 37:21-28.

Verse 11 "The children of Judah and the children of Israel".

After the return from Babylon the distinction between Israel and Judah was entirely destroyed and those that did return were included under one denomination, Jews. The one head could refer to their leader, Zerubbabel and afterwards under Ezra and Nehemiah. The final fulfillment of course will be in Jesus Christ, so that there shall be one flock and one shepherd over that flock - Eze. 37:21-28; Zech. 14:8,9; Zech. 12:6-10.

"They shall come up out of the land"

Assyria and Babylon in particular, but also from the uttermost parts of the earth, where they have been scattered.

"Great shall be the day of Jezreel"

Refers to the seed of God - Even as God has dispersed them (Jezreel) or sowed them in many lands in His wrath - 'He shall reap them and gather them in his bounty and mercy' - Jer. 31:10

HOSEA CHAPTER 2

Verse 1 "Ammi" - My people.
"Ruhamah" - Having obtained mercy.

No longer will they be called Lo-ruhamah - 'Not having obtained mercy', or Lo-ammi - 'Not my people'.

Speaks of the day when Jews and Gentiles shall be one in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 2 "Plead with your mother, plead" In verses 1 and 2, Hosea is continuing the parable of the unfaithful wife. The wayward wife is Israel - the grieved husband is Yahweh - the children are the Godly among the Israelites who are urged to plead with their mother (The ten tribed kingdom as a whole).

It is the language of a wrathful and exasperated husband. Hosea says that Israel will experience punishment and humiliation reserved for the unfaithful wife under the law of Moses - to wit - left naked Ezekial 16:39 - Stoned to death Eze. 16:40.

Verse 3 "Lest I strip her naked" - 'Lest I expose her to infamy, want and punishment'- Ezek. 16:39; 23:26. This is what death does Job 1:21 "And set her like a dry land".

Israel, if obedient were promised a land flowing with milk and honey. If disobedient just the reverse - Deut. 28; Lev. 26.

The flood as a judgment and cleansing agent beautifully illustrates God's method of purging for both natural and spiritual Israel.

Verse 4 "Children of whoredoms" - Israel were to put idols out of sight lest they should be tempted to worship them. 'Thou shalt have no graven images before thee'- exhortation - avoid temptation.

They are all idolators and have been consecrated to idols, whose marks they bear. The God of Israel set before them His statutes and judgment Deut. 4:8 - More to be desired than gold - Psa. 19:10; Psa. 4:7 The axe must be laid to the roots so that desire of the flesh will be cut off -

Verse 5 "That give me my bread" - Israel made Ceres the goddess of their corn; Bachos the god of their wine, and then foolishly fancied that they received these from heathen gods. Many today argue the same that we receive temporal gain by our own hands, not God - see Jer. 44:17,18.

Verse 6 "I will hedge up thy way with thorns"

Psa. 7:12 "If he turn not he will whet his sword"

They shall be perplexed and embarrassed in all their counsels, and disappointed in all their expectations.

To hedge ones way with thorns is to hedge the way with the products of sin. Even if Israel conquers the thorns, God will raise a wall to completely obliterate her path.

Sin invariably leads to a blind alley. A dead end street. The broad road and wide gate of which Jesus speaks lures. That is why many go in there at Matt. 7:13. But what had seemed a shelter soon turns into a Hindrance.

Exhortation - Jer. 10:23; 2 Cor. 12:7

Christ came to help remove thorns - or to give us power as He did Paul to live with the thorns, 2 Cor 12:8-9. Christ can help us because he knew the thorns first hand. He wore them. His road was blocked by a cross. The very thorns He wore - the very cross He bore became the gateway to eternal life. Those who share 'the fellowship of His sufferings' will come to know 'the power of His resurrection' Phil. 3:10 'Behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it' Rev. 3:8.

I can do all things through Christ - Phil. 4:13

We are more than conquerors - Rom. 8:37

Israel was to learn that their idols could not give them bread, water,

wool, flax, oil, nor drink. Israel was to be led so deep into captivity that they would never find their way back. Those who were carried to Assyria have been lost among the nations, few of them ever returned to Judea.

Examples - Gen. 19:11 Sodomites - Syrians 2 Kings 6:18
(Exhortations) Pro. 22:5; Psa. 18:26; Lev. 26:23,24; crosses and hedges can protect us Job 33:17; Psa. 91.

Verse 7 "She shall pursue her lovers...and she shall seek them" - This clearly indicates the power of Israel's wayward position and the stubbornness of her unbelief. How appropriate Isaiah's commission Isa. 6:9-11. In Eden Adam and Eve sought fleshly food and received thorns and thistles. They sought beauty and obtained ugliness so they wanted to hide. They sought wisdom and obtained disillusionment. So Israel pursues but misses - seeks but never finds. This is the futility of sin. He hath set the world ("olam" eternity) in their hearts (Ecc. 3:11), but man seeks on the animal level.

"I will go and return to my first husband" - Not through love does Israel return to God, but because it offers an avenue of escape from bafflement and frustration - no word of penitence - no evidence of a chastened mood. No sorrow for her evil doings, only the attitude, 'I will return to my first husband for I was better off than I am now'. Same attitude of the returning - Luke 15:17 - prodigal son. When Moab is weary of the high place he shall go to the sanctuary Isa. 16:12

Israel's return to God led through ignorance, privation, sorrow, frustration and futility - great lesson return unto the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near. On the road back we shall find Him coming toward us for He is 'slow to anger'. Psa. 103:8-10 'the depth of the riches' Rom. 11:33.

Verse 8 "For she did not know that I gave her corn" - How often do we attribute our earthly gains to our own hands, Verse 5. We act as the owner instead of the steward - landlord rather than the tenant. We are to live by James 1:17; 1 Cor. 4:7; Rom. 8:12. Yet our gratitude and humility is often superseded by pride and arrogance - principle fully explained, Romans 1:25. This is the deceitfulness of sin - John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:14. Compare the elegance of a full page liquor ad with the final result - a staggering alcoholic, and we visualize the deceitfulness of sin. Sin prevents us from seeing the ground is soft until we are properly stuck. The grain, wine, and oil were staple products of Palestine. The silver and gold were not native, so this implies they were obtained from commercial activity - in the time of Solomon it was imported through his maritime port at Ezion-geber. God calls it His corn, Verse 8 - Israel calls it my corn, Verse 5.

"which they prepared for Baal" - or 'offered to Baal' or 'they used for Baal' Chapter 8:4. The most common use for silver and gold was in overlaying images - Jer. 10:4; Isa. 40:19. How often are the gifts of God's bounty perverted into means of dishonoring Him. God gives us wisdom, strength, material gain, and we use them to sin against Him with greater skill, power and effect.

Verse 9 "Therefore will I return and take away" - I will withhold my blessings which Israel has prostituted by her idolatrous services. I will neither

give the land rain nor fruitful seasons - in Israel the withdrawal of the corn, wine, wool and flax brought poverty, suffering and captivity. The withdrawal of these blessings in the near future will help bring the time of trouble such as never was - The basic cause SIN. Opposition to God.

- Verse 10 "In the sight of her lovers" - Her idols and her faithful or faithless allies shall know her secret wickedness, for I shall make it public. Jer. 8:1,2.
When Israel is deprived of food and clothing she will have nothing to offer upon the altars of Baal and her stubborn willfulness will be revealed.
- Verse 11 "Her feast days" - The three great feast days of Israel are referred to here: passover, weeks of first fruits, tabernacles. Note that they are not referred to now as "God's feasts", but "her feasts" - compare John 2:14-17 with Matt. 23:28.
Israel observed the feasts, but not in the way or manner in which God had appointed. They worshipped not at Jerusalem but probably at Dan and Bethel where the calves were. They observed the feasts not to the honor of God, but to enjoy times of mirth, feasting, music and dancing. They had a form of Godliness but denied the power thereof. Isa. 1:13.
Exhortation - this can happen to us.
- Verse 12 "These are my rewards" - They attributed all blessings of providence as rewards received from the idols which they worshipped. God says He will now take away the provisions for these solemnities. Her vines and her fig trees will be laid waste and turned into brushwood and the wild beasts shall eat them. The destruction of vines and fig trees (temporal gain) causes the mirth of a carnal heart to cease.
- Verse 13 "Days of Baalim" - To visit signifies to inflict punishment. Days refer to the times when Israel was pouring out their idolatrous worship and sacrifices to Baal. Baalim refers to the multitude of false gods worshipped by them. Baal was a general name for a male idol, as Astarte was for a female. Baalim includes all the male idols - Ashtaroth refers to all those that were female. The species of idol was often designated by some adjunct: as Baal-Zebub, Baal-Peor, Baal-Zephon, Baal-Berith, Etc.

"her errings" (Heb. Nizmah) signifies a nose jewel. These are worn by females in the east to the present day.

"and her jewels" (Heb. Vechelyatah) rings, armlets, bracelets, ankle-rings and ornaments of this kind.

"and forgat me saith the Lord" - our treacherous departures from God are owing to our forgetfulness of Him, His attributes, His relation to us and our obligations to Him.
- Verse 14 "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" - After these judgments I will restore her again. I will deal with her as an affectionate husband would do to an unfaithful wife. I will forgive all if she will amend her ways. Here the mood of Hosea changes from severity to tenderness - from judgment to mercy. Israel's deepest experiences came out of the wilderness of Sinai - the stars shine the brightest when the night is darkest and so many times it is out of dark experiences that God speaks to our heart 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion'. (Amos 6:1)

The sermon on the mount was preached in the shadow of Nero's throne - out of the darkness of a pagan empire came the light of the world.

God did not take Israel into Canaan direct, 'but through the way of the wilderness'. (Ex. 13:18) A forty-year journey of hard, barren and desolate experiences. It is in the wilderness that we come close to God. It was in the wilderness that Christ prayed (Luke 5:16). The soul that does not know solitude can hardly know God - 'enter into thy closet' (Matt. 6:6) God spoke to Moses in the lonely recesses of Mt. Horeb, and Moses became the founder of a great nation; to Elijah in a cave, and Elijah became a towering statesman prophet; to John the Baptist in the desert, and John started a reform movement in Judea. God spoke to each of these alone, but what He said to them, though personal, was not private. It is still in solitude that God speaks to the heart.

Verse 15 "The valley of Achor for a door of hope" - This valley was where Achan was stoned - Josh. 7:24-26 - signifies the valley of trouble because he troubled Israel, and there God troubled him. This putting away of the accursed thing changed the valley of trouble into the valley of hope. The same can be done for us - Romans Chapter 6; Eph. 2:11,12.

"And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth" - This refers to the song of triumph after captivity in Egypt and deliverance through the Red Sea. Exodus 15 points to the day when we shall sing Moses' song of victory (Rev. 15:3). We are now in tribulation, but the valley of Achor offers hope. In that day it shall be asked 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes?' (Hope) 'These are they which came out of great tribulation' (sorrow).

Verse 16 "Thou shalt call me Ishi" - Heb. My man or my husband - a title of love and affection - possible reference to the day when Christ claims his bride.

"Shalt call me no more Baali" - Heb. That is my Lord or my Master. This title had been applied to false gods. This was spoken to Israel that they should scrupulously avoid idolatry. Through the trials that God brought upon them they had such full proof of the inefficacy of their idolatrous worship that, after their captivity, they never more served idols - they should no more say 'O Baal hear us' (Elijah on Mt. Carmel) they shall obey the strict literal command against idolatry - Ex. 23:13; Psa. 16:4; Eph. 5:3; Zech. 13:2.

The heart that is saturated with God's Truth will come to hate that which once they loved. Zeph. 3:9; 1 Thess. 1:9.

Verse 17 The purpose of this verse is to drive home the significance of what is said in Verse 16.

Verse 18 "In that day will I make a covenant for them" - This refers to that day when God's glory shall cover the earth and the ferocity of the beast shall be subdued - Lev. 26:6; Num. 22:21-30; Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; Ezek. 34:25; Job 5:23.
Wars will also cease so that Israel will live securely - Isa. 2:4; 9:4-5; Zech. 9:10; Psa. 46:9; Psa. 72.

Verse 19 "I will betroth thee unto me" - The people are always considered under

the emblem of a wife unfaithful to her husband, clearly speaking of the day when Israel purified and cleansed shall become the nucleus of that kingdom promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"In righteousness" - According to law, reason and equity.

"In judgment" - According to what is fit and becoming.

"In lovingkindness" - Having the utmost affection and love for thee.

"In mercies" - Forgiving and blotting out all past sins. Possibly there is an allusion here to the dowry given by the husband to his wife.

Verse 20 "In faithfulness" - Thou shalt no more serve idols, but rather be faithful to him who calls himself thy husband. God uses these symbols because they are meaningful to us. God is used mostly as the Divine Father. Only once does Paul employ the metaphor of the Divine husband. 2 Cor. 11:2 Such language should never induce familiarity to the point that we forget the greatness of God and obscure the humility we must possess.

"Thou shalt know the Lord" - There shall be no more infidelity on thy part, nor divorce on mine.

Verse 21 "I will hear saith the Lord" - This sentence shows how fully the solution has been determined by the Almighty, and how implicitly they might depend on the divine promise.

"I will hear the heavens" - I will hear the atmosphere where vapours are collected. I will hear the clouds when they wish to deposit their life-giving showers upon the earth.

"They hear the earth" - The clouds shall hear the earth when it seems to cry for rain (Fulfillment of Deut. 28:23,24) While under this judgment of famine they call to the earth for corn, wine, etc., for support of their families, but the earth cannot give unless she receives (Psa. 65:9)

Verse 22 "They shall hear Jezreel" - We must expect all our comforts from God, and when we are disappointed in them, we must look up to God Psa. 121:1,2. The full cycle - (1) The corn cries to the earth (2) The earth to the heavens (3) The heavens to God and God says, I will hear. And so the vegetative energy is dropped from heaven and Jezreel's cry for life's necessities is satisfied. If in the type God hears the heavens pleading for His people, how much more will He hear the intercession of His only begotten Son.

Jezreel signifies 'sown of God'. God will change the curse into a blessing. What God sows He will give the increase.

Verse 23 "I will sow her unto me in the earth" - Refers to the future glory of purified, redeemed, and restored Israel. Ezek. 37:21-28; Micah 4:8; Zech. 13:8,9.

HOSEA CHAPTER 3

Verse 1 "Go yet, love a woman" - This is the very heart of this chapter, i.e. God's love to those who are not worthy of it. It was the proper conception of this love that enabled the prophet to bring back his wayward wife. She was not worthy of his love because Gomer had gone after other men even as Israel had gone after other gods.

One of God's greatest attributes is that of love - 1 John 4:8. There is a great difference between Divine love and human love. Hosea here discovers it. Christ revealed it even to the giving of his life to manifest it. All of His true disciples must not only preach it, but manifest it, if they are to participate in its benefits. In the English we have only one word for love. In the Greek, however, there are three. We will consider only two here - one is 'Eros', a word that is constantly used in classical Greek, but a word that never appears in the New Testament. The other word is 'Agape', a word which is never used in classical Greek, but is used almost exclusively in the New Testament.

"Eros" indicates human love such as 'I love my child'. "Agape" used in the New Testament means Divine love, and this is the love that God revealed to Hosea and which was later exhibited by Christ. This love is described in Psa. 103:17-18.

The Greeks saved their love for the educated, and those who were intellectually qualified. Christ had a different conception. Christ's love (Agape) included not the proud, wise and haughty, but the poor, weak, halt, etc. Matt. 9:13; Matt. 11:25, not because they merited it, but because God is love.

pd. The cross was a stumbling block to the Jews because it made ship-wreck of their self-righteous pride. The cross was foolishness to the Greeks because it made havoc of their intellectual pride. "Agape" love however, is unmerited love, and not controlled by education or righteousness. (Romans 5:7,8).

pd. Hosea could not obey the command of God with "Eros" or human love, for how could a man take an adulteress to his heart and truly love her. In taking back his wife he captures the true meaning of Divine love in God's taking back of the children of Israel. We must manifest Divine love "Agape" in our own lives now so that we may be participants of "Agape" love in the day of judgment. Luke 6:27; 1 John 4:16; Matt. 5:46,47.

Verse 1 "Beloved of her friend" - Heb. lover of evil

"Flagons of wine" - used for libations (poured on the ground in tribute to idols), or drunk at idol feasts.

R. V. 'cakes of raisins' - These were used in service to the Baals, and signified the harvest of plenty being made of pressed grapes and fine meal, mentioned in connection with Moab, Isa.16:7 (R. V.) In Jeremiah 7:18 as used by the worshippers of the queen of heaven (R.V.)

Verse 2 "So I bought her" - Fifteen pieces of silver was paid by Hosea - price of a slave was 30, Ex. 21:32.

Israel must now be humbled. Her rations must be limited to a homer and

a half of barley till she be sufficiently humbled by a competent time of trial. Once God had given Egypt as a ransom for Israel (Isa. 43:3-5), but now that they have gone a whoring from Him, He will only give fifteen pieces of silver.

Before we can acceptably come to God we must realize 'I am no more worthy to be called thy son'. This is a picture of God using poverty as the molding furnace for Israel.

Verse 3 "Thou shalt abide for me many days" - This was to be a time of separation and discipline for the returned Gomer. It was Hosea's desire that this isolation would make Gomer become his constantly. This would give Gomer opportunity to repent, and count the cost (Luke 14:30). If she would abstain from her evil ways he would take her again - let them typically again wander 40 years in the wilderness - they must sit still, keep silence, wait for the salvation of the Lord, and in the meantime bear their yoke Lam. 3:26-28; Psa. 85:8.

Verse 4 "Many days without a king" - This prophecy has literally been fulfilled. Since the destruction of the temple by the Romans (A.D. 70) they have neither king, nor prince, nor any civil government of their own. They have lived as exiles without priests, sacrifices, urim and thummin; without prophet, oracle, or communication of any kind from God. This is comparable to Gomer's time of seclusion or waiting.

"Without an image" - ephod - teraphim (Septuagint) without a sacrifice, without an altar, without a priesthood, and without 'oracles' i.e. the urim and thummin.

"Image" - pillar or idol of the type that God forbade them to erect.

"Ephod" - high priests ceremonial garments.

"Teraphim" - idolatrous images. Urim and thummin belonged to the breastplate which was attached to the high priests garments Ex. 28:15,30 i.e. they were to be without any means of public worship either to idols or to God.

Verse 5 "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return" - Shall repent of their iniquities - forsake their idols, and serve God. Zech. 9:9-17; 10:10-12; 12:6-10; 13:6,8,9; Ezek. 37:21-28.

"And David their king" - This is the restored throne of David with Christ its promised heir and seed reigning from Jerusalem. 2Sam. 7:12-16; Psa. 89:3,4,19,20, 34-37; Isa. 9:6,7; Luke 1:32,33; Acts 15:14-17.

HOSEA CHAPTER 4

Verse 1 "The Lord hath a controversy" - This controversy is between Yahweh on one side with Israel and Judah on the other. The reason for the controversy- there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. This refers to the mind of the people and their heartfelt attitude to God. The lack of knowledge automatically eliminated mercy. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he'. (Proverbs 23:7) And when a man substitutes the works of the flesh for the fruit of the spirit, there will soon be a vicious practice.

Verse 6 says, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge'. Hosea spoke, however, of the knowledge of God. Secular knowledge without the knowledge of God is woefully weak and inadequate. cp. James 2:19 with 2 Timothy 1:12. When we can say with Paul (Galations 2:20) 'Christ liveth in me', then we can say that we are beginning to acquire the knowledge of God.

Verse 2 "By swearing and lying" - Where there is no truth there will be lies and perjury. Where there is no mercy there will be killing, slaying and murder. Private stealing soon becomes public robbery and the downward progression of sin leads to destruction. Psalm 1; James 1:13; Genesis 11:6; Ecclesiastes 8:11 The obvious result is voiced in Verse 3.

"Blood toucheth blood" - It was at this time that so much blood was shed in contention for the crown--Shallum slew Zechariah, Menahem slew Shallum, Pekah slew Pekahiah, Hoshea slew Pekah. The land was polluted with blood. Psalm 106:38. It was filled with blood from one end to the other. 2 Kings 21:16 This probably refers to 2 Chronicles 24:20-22. This was the apex of their wickedness, and it was from this point that their ruin was dated. Matthew 23:35.

Verse 3 "Therefore shall the land mourn", i.e. fruitful seasons shall be denied, for the God whom they have denied controls all. Fulfillment of Deuteronomy 29:23.

"That dwelleth therein shall languish" - When God's judgements are in the earth, epidemic conditions shall prevail with all the resultant consequences such as death mourning, etc.

"The beasts of the fields and with the fowls" - The famine adds misery by bringing death to the cattle and all domestic animals.

"The fishes of the sea also shall be taken away" - The huge schools of fish that God in His tender mercy has provided for the sustenance of man shall be caused to turn away from the shore. All of this was done because of the iniquity of the land. Warning! God's principles do not change, and it will be the violation of these very same laws that will bring the time of trouble such as never was.

Verse 4 "Yet no man strive" (or no man contendeth). None can say, let me pluck the mote out of thy eye, because he knows that there is a beam in his own. One of the reasons for Israel's widespread moral deterioration was the corruption of the priesthood. Instead of being sources of illumination, the light in them had become darkness. The real sources of illumination are inner, and when the light within becomes darkness no

external light can help (Urim and Thummin 3:4). The priests had not only sunk to a new low in their indulgence of evil, but they encouraged the people to sin also.

Reason: as the people's sins increased so did the sin offerings increase, and so did the wealth of the clergy. This was certainly true in Herod's temple in the days of Jesus the Christ.

This verse teaches us that as long as there is any hope a man should be reproved of his sins. When a man becomes hardened beyond bending, man should no longer strive to turn his brother back to God.

"For thy people are" - The people had willingly fallen into this very same pattern. Instead of reflecting the light which should have emanated from the priests, they reflected the darkness.

Verse 5 "Therefore shalt thou fall in the day" - Priest and people alike shall all in the most open and public manner, that the heathen may know that Yahweh He is the Lord.

"and the prophet also shall fall" - The false prophet shall fall even while he is taking his prognostications from stars, meteors, etc.

"and I will destroy thy mother" - This refers to the mother city, either Jerusalem or Samaria (capital city of ten tribes, 42 miles north of Jerusalem).

Verse 6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" - This knowledge is not secular knowledge, else the world would be a firm and secure footing, for knowledge of this type was never any further advanced than it is today. Israel had forsaken the true wisdom or knowledge that can only be found in God.

Hosea is not alone in this, for Ezra set his heart upon the study of the law of God, upon obeying it, and upon teaching its rules and regulations in Israel (Ezra 7:10). (Note that Ezra made these things a part of his own life before he made any attempt to teach them to others). Ezra's approach is the right approach. Even though the word of God is that knowledge by which a man can be saved, yet this knowledge must not only master a man's thoughts, but his heart and his will. It is not abstract or theoretical, but personal knowledge of experience: 'I know whom I have believed' (2 Timothy 1:12). Man does not so much discover this knowledge as does God reveal it, for it requires God Himself to speak, discipline and chasten.

Modern thought is as it was in ancient Greece, i.e. that education, secular, factual and scientific, is the answer. H. G. Wells said that civilization is a race between education and catastrophe. Secular education prepares for making a living but not for living a life.

The inner conflict between knowing and doing, between desire and duty, is the very heart of the human problem, 'This is the way, walk ye in it' (Isaiah 30:21). 'But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind' (Romans 7:23). Secular education makes no attempt to face

that problem. It gives us information about everything else beside ourselves, and leaves mankind in the realm of a glorified guinea pig. This exaltation is in the sight of God an abomination.

"because thou hast rejected knowledge" - They might have become wise if they had not rejected God's merciful offer for improvement. Warning: We can be guilty also by letting fleeting, temporal things of this life rob us of our opportunity to study His word.

"thou shalt be no priest to me" - Possibly the words here are addressed to a particular priest, but more likely to the entire priesthood who had turned their heart to idolatry.

In the providence of God, one people, Israel, was chosen for the salvation of all men. The nation itself was the bearer of salvation. When the nation proved inadequate through infidelity, God's method became that of progressive reduction. He turned from the nation to the remnant (Isaiah 10:21) A further reduction of this remnant is made to one man (Jesus the Christ) (Isa.42:1-4). It is through this one that the remnant, natural and spiritual, will be saved - many are called, but few are chosen.

Verse 7 "As they were increased, so they sinned against me" - This is the old, old story that has ever been true of riches and prosperity in relation to God and His precious word. To wit - Christ and the rich young ruler.

Love of money - root of all evil. Wordly prosperity is an insidious danger to spiritual life. The gold mines of Peru helped to wreck the fortunes of Spain, for men abandoned honest work and became avaricious adventurers. Life is qualitative rather than quantitative. Nothing tries a man more than prosperity. Exhortation: let not these temples become a den of moneychangers. God will not dwell in a temple wherein dwells the god of gold.

"therefore will I change their glory into shame" - As the idolators at Dan and Bethel have changed my glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass (Romans 1:23), so will I change their glory into shame or ignominy...in the day of my wrath, their calf gods shall not deliver them. Women that glory in their beauty shall mark well Isaiah 3:16-24.

Verse 8 "They eat up the sin of my people" Hebrew 'chattath' - the sin offering. The sin offering was called for when a soul sinned through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things that ought not be done, Leviticus 4:2. The offering required a young bullock without blemish. The sin offering provided escape for a false position, i.e. if the will of God requires certain things be not done, then the man who does them does things that are displeasing, whether he knows it or not. A sin offering was not exacted till knowledge made the sinner aware of his sin (Leviticus 4:23-26). Then if he failed, this was deliberate sin against God. It is a significant forerunner of the New Testament doctrine that where there is blindness, there is no accountability, John 9:41. Only where there is knowledge does the ground of condemnation exist, James 4:17; John 3:19; Luke 12:47. Where there is a great privilege, there is a great responsibility, John 15:22-25. To whom much is given, much is required, Luke 12:48. Knowledge makes baptism a command. To disobey

this command brings us into responsibility with God. The priests were not thinking of the Mosaic ritual, they were eating this sacrifice for their own joy and profit from the money accrued from the sale of the animal. The priests lived on sacrificial meat, Leviticus 6:26, and the more they had the more they were pleased. This increased with the sins of the people. The more people sinned, more sin offerings, more priestly banquets; in truth they feed upon the sin of my people. We can do the same today. Beware, the sin offering was offered contrary to the law, for their hearts were set on iniquity. They wish to do what ever is contrary to God.

Verse 9 "Like people - like priest" - The priests were to be leaders, they were to influence their flock. The priests were now following the practice of Aaron in golden calf worship.

Today the life and spirit of our ecclesiastics depend upon those that we place in positions of teachers, exhorters and lecturers. We cannot put an ice cube in such a position, and complain because the teacher does not perspire.

Verse 10 "they shall eat, and not have enough" - Whatever means they may use to satisfy or to gratify themselves shall be ineffectual. One that follows the flesh shall eat, but not be satisfied. He drinks, but his thirst is not quenched. Every evil he indulges in simply wets his appetite. Each successive portion must be increased for desire is accentuated as satisfaction eludes him. True happiness can only come from God. 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness' (Psalm 17:15) Isaiah 55:2

Verse 11 "whoredom and wine" - These debaucheries generally go together. This is a moral truth that is applicable to all times and every age. The special reference here is to the licentious orgies connected with the Syrian worship of God. Isaiah 28:1,7; Amos 4:1. Drunkenness played an integral part in the Canaanite worship to which Israel had succumbed. The vine was an object of worship, and bore some special relationship to the Baals (the god of tillage). Liquor and lust deprive men of their money and understanding. The cocktail hour may be more sophisticated than the old time saloon, but the leopard has not changed his spots.

"take away the heart" - darken the understanding, deprave the judgment, pervert the will, debase all passions.

Verse 12 "at their stocks" - This has reference to their wooden gods (Jeremiah 2:27; Habakkuk 2:19).

"their staff declareth unto them" - This is an allusion to divination by rods (Ezekiel 21:21,22). The diviner would strip half the bark from the rod and throw it from him. If the bare side landed up, it was a good omen; if it landed down, it was a bad omen. The Arabs used two rods: one marked "God bids", the other "God forbids". In any crisis their future course of action depended upon the one that came out first.

"from under their God" - From under the overshadowing presence, and protection of God. This was that which protected Israel from the heat of

the sun in their escape from Egypt. This is that which shall protect us (Psalm 91).

Note and warning concerning Israel's turning to idolatry: When Israel gave up the true worship of God they filled the void with worship to Baal. Every man must have some form of worship. Paul at Mars Hill (Acts 17:23) 'Whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you'. Hitler denounced the Christian God, but not the gods of power, etc. The communists deny Yahweh, but in His place they worship Lenin's tomb. Their kingdom is the conquest of the world--their cross the hammer and sickle. Israel still believed in Yahweh, but she worshipped Him from Canaanitish shrines built for the Baals, with its immorality and lewdness.

OUR REAL GOD IS NOT THE GOD WE WORSHIP, BUT THE GOD WE SERVE. Note Isaiah 29:13 carefully, also Luke 12:15; Matthew 6:33; 2 Peter 3:18; Luke 12:19-20. It is just as much idolatry to worship God according to a false mental image as by means of a false metal image.

Verse 13 "They sacrifice upon the tops of mountains" - High places were selected by idolators because of their greater nearness to the heavenly hosts which they worshipped (Deuteronomy 12:2).

"the shadow thereof is good" - Their daughter committed whoredom and their spouses committed adultery. Their deities were worshipped by prostitution in the polluted worship of Astarte, the Phoenecian goddess of love. They drank much in their idol worship (v.11). and thus their passions became inflamed. The thick groves were ideal to hide them in these immoralities.

Verse 14 "I will not punish" - you are hopeless, reproof and chastening mean nothing to you. When God in judgment removes His judgments the case of that people is desperate. While there is hope there is correction, Hebrews 12:6-12; Job 5:17; Proverbs 3:11; 19:18; Isaish 26:16; Psalm 84:12.

"themselves are separated" - reference here is to certain debaucheries which should not be described--hard to describe a people any lower morally. Israel had become a stench in the nostrils of even the heathen round about. They were abominable beyond precedent. Women consecrating themselves to serve idols by public prostitution--both men and women acting unnaturally, and from these heathen altars making a pretense of serving Yahweh.

Verse 15 "let not Judah offend" - Even though there is now no hope for Israel the exhortation and warning goes forth to Judah, who has the legal priesthood, the temple rites and Jerusalem--do not follow her bad example.

"Gilgal" - Situated between Jordan and Jericho on the confines of Samaria. Gilgal was the place where the covenant of circumcision was renewed when the people passed over Jordan (Joshua 5:10-15; 1 Samuel 10:8; 15:21. It was afterward rendered infamous by the worship of idols after Jeroboam had set up his idolatry. Amos 4:4; 5:5 compare margin Judges 3:19.

"Beth-aven" - i.e. the house of vanity or idols--a name substituted in contempt for Bethel the house of God, once sacred to Jehovah (Genesis

28:17-19; 35:7) later made the seat of the worship of calves by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28-33; 13:1; Jeremiah 48:13; Amos 7:13).

"go ye up" - refers to the fact that Bethel was on a hill, Joshua 16:1.

"nor swear the Lord liveth" - this formula of an oath was appointed by God Himself (Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2). It is strictly forbidden in conjunction with idolatry and falsehood (Isaiah 48:1; Ezekial 20:39; Zephaniah 1:5).

Verse 16 "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer" - Israel had represented God under the form of calves--1 Kings 12:28; but it is she herself who is one. The implication here is not of a wayward, but a stubborn spirit. Hosea was a peasant of the soil. His many references show that he was familiar with farm life: 2:6; 6:4; 10:11; 12:11. Anyone familiar with farm life will not miss the symbol of the heifer--stubborn, restive, unwilling to be led, darting hither and thither.

"as a lamb in a large place" - RSV (question) 'can the Lord feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?' And the answer is obviously, NO! It is love service that is acceptable to God--not forced service. Here we have a picture of peace in contrast to turmoil. A peace that comes from submission rather than being self-assertive and aggressive which often represents activity as progress and man's opinion for knowledge. The very helplessness of the lamb is the source of its strength. If speech could be given to a lamb, it would be first to admit its own lack of wisdom to find its way or defend itself. A sheep without a shepherd is in a precarious situation. Let us recognize that we are these sheep--if we are in the family of God. Note carefully Jeremiah 10:23, 'O lord I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps'. Let us never be led away through arrogance and overconfidence in our own wisdom and ability. Let us never become as the restive heifer, self-assertive, stubborn, a victim of fleeting moods and ill equipped to meet the real problems of life.

ed. However, never let us feel that a faithful walk in the truth is easy. Our constant companion is the cross (crucifixion of the flesh). Our way to the kingdom of God is marked by blood, tears and sweat. Our peace in Christ is not stagnation, we are not offered freedom from danger, but freedom in danger. We are not offered freedom from pain, but the tools to turn that pain into joy - Hebrews 12:2, 'Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God'. God does not shield us from battle, but fights at our side with us. Christ was led as a lamb to the slaughter, but his death was swallowed up in victory.

"a lamb in a large place" - not in a good sense, as Isaiah 30:23. Lambs like a large pasture, but it is not so safe for them as a small one fenced from wild beasts. God will feed them, but it shall be with the "rod", Micah 7:14. It shall be no longer in the narrow confines of Israel, but they shall be scattered over the vast expanse of Assyria, as an unprotected prey to their foes--as sheep without a shepherd.

Verse 17 "Ephraim" - This has reference to the ten tribes. Judah at this time was not so deeply steeped in idolatry as was Israel or as they later became.

"is joined to idols" - That is, has become incorporated with false idols. When people identify themselves with whoremongers they become one flesh with the harlot - Numbers 25:3; 1 Corinthians 6:16.

"idols" - The Hebrew means also sorrows, pains, implying the pain which idolatry brings.

"let him alone"- Verse 15 shows that this warning is to Judah to avoid the contagion of Israel's bad example. Leave him to his fate, lest in your efforts to save him you fall yourself, Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6,45; 2 Corinthians 6:17. (It is possible to become such a slave to sin that we become impervious to reason. Let us pay special heed to this fact as exemplified in Revelation 22:11.)

Hosea is not exhorting us to be quitters when the task seems hopeless or is unproductive. The result is not in our hands. Our responsibility is the planting and the watering--Paul may plant Apollos water, but God gives the increase. God never gives us up - Hosea 11:8.

Verse 18 "their drink is sour" - Metaphor for utter degeneracy of principle (Isaiah 1:22) Not mere ordinary sin, but referring to drunkards who vomit and smell sour.

"her rulers with shame do love" - Rather--have loved shame--they glory in their abominations.

"give ye" - Proverbs 30:15 Their own rulers sold justice for gifts.

Verse 19 "The wind hath bound her" - RSV 'A wind has wrapped them in its wings' This is a poetic metaphor (Psalms 18:10) Here we have a picture of the violence and speed of the conquerer that will sweep Israel into exile.

"they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices" - or their altars, - i.e. they will discover how utterly inadequate their pagan rites have been - Hosea 10:6. The true nature of our pagan deities is never revealed until the day of crisis. Let us be men and women of wisdom, and fill our lives today with the indestructible faith of tried gold, so that we may withstand the piercing judgment fire of Yahweh.

HOSEA CHAPTER 5

Verse 1 "Hear ye this, O priests" - In Chapter 4 the warning was directed to the priests and people. In Chapter 5 it is directed against the ruling body. The king is probably Pekah, the contemporary of Ahaz, king of Judah under whom idolatry was carried so far in Judah. The priests, the very ones that should have carried Israel to great spiritual heights, are the very ones who brought them to disaster. God considers all men equal and demands that we do the same. (James 2:1-4)

"Judgment is toward you" - i.e. threatens you from God.

"Ye have been a snare on Mizpah and a net spread upon Tabor" - Both of these places are eminent for hunting and hence the natural occurrence of the words snare and net.

"Mizpah" (watchtower) - identified with the sanctuary on the east side of Jordan. (Judges 10:17; 11:11,29,34). Scene of the solemn pact between Jacob and Laban.

"Tabor" (lofty place) - east end of the plain of Jezreel where Israel's army had been mustered under Deborah and Barak. Judges 4:6. Also the traditional Mount of Transfiguration. These were both high hills and had become heathen cultic centers, high places where Israel had set up their heathen idolatrous worship. From these vantage points, i.e. Mizpah (watchtower) and Tabor (lofty place) the priests should have become the watchmen on Zion's walls. Instead they had become as hunters, snares, nets, betraying those under their jurisdiction. Exhortation: unto whomsoever much is given, much is required. Luke 12:48. We are the priests, we are the custodians of God's word. Self-examination will produce amazing results, if we are honest. Gossip, evil speaking, tale bearing, jealousy, envy, hate, these are the evils that will deprive us of Agape Love in the age to come.

Verse 2 "The revolvers are profound to make slaughter" - Here the original seems to indicate a reference to hunters digging deep pits in the ground and lightly covering them over so that the beasts might fall in and be trapped. RVS 'They have made deep the pit of Shittim'. Jeroboam set up calves in Dan and Bethel to prevent Israel returning to Jerusalem to offer the true sacrifice to Yahweh. The decree, however, had long gone forth. Isaiah 29:15

"Though I have been a rebuker" - It is felt that "correction" is a more accurate translation. The sin of the people was increased by the fact that God had constantly reprimanded the Israelites. It is quite clear that Israel had come to love wickedness. They had come to "sit in the seat of the scornful" Psalm 1:1.

Verse 3 "I know Ephraim and Israel is not hid from me" - Here Ephraim is distinguished from the other nine tribes of the northern kingdom. Ephraim is here addressed as being foremost in idolatry. Emphasis is laid on "I", Yahweh; the Creator and Sustainer of all the earth knows our every thought, action and deed. No matter how well we may think our deed is concealed or camouflaged, yet the searchlight of God's eternal presence will erase the darkness of the night and expose all to our shame and reproof.

Verse 4 "They will not frame their doings" i.e., they will not repent of their evil deeds. Here is the golden key to life eternal. John 12:24; Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; Luke 9:23.

"For the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them" - Not only physical but spiritual adultery was ruling their lives. Shekinah glory of God had departed from the temple in days of Ezekial because idols or spiritual adultery had moved in. Ezekial 10:18. Spiritual adultery still present in days of Christ. John 2:14-17.

Exhortation: Our bodies are now the temples of the living God. 1 Corinthians 3:16. God will not dwell in our temple unless our sins are framed for His viewing, acknowledged and repented of. Let us purify our bodies of the flesh with the cleansing formula of the fruit of the Spirit.

Verse 5 "The pride of Israel doth testify to his face" - The boldness with which they practice idolatry manifests the depravity of their heart. Their pride and arrogance shall be humbled. The pride of Israel testifies that they are rebels to God in the gait and gaudiness of their worship - Prov. 7:10. They have that proud look which the Lord hates - Isa. 3:9.

(The fall of Israel) Tiglath-Pileser died in B.C. 727, and was succeeded by Shalmaneser IV. The refusal of Hoshea to continue the annual tribute brought the new Assyrian monarch into the west--Tyre was besieged unsuccessfully, Hoshea was carried away captive and Samaria was blockaded for three years. During the blockade, Shalmaneser died and the crown was siezed by one of the Assyrian generals. The latter assumed the name of Sargon in memory of the famous Babylonian monarch who had reigned so many centuries before. The capture of Samaria took place in his first year (B.C. 722) 27,280 of its inhabitants were sent into exile, but only 50 chariots were found in the city. An Assyrian governor was appointed over it who was commissioned to send each year to Ninevah the same tribute as that paid by Hoshea. The comparatively small number of Israelites who were carried into captivity shows that Sargon contented himself with removing only those persons and their families, who had taken part in the revolt against him. In fact, Samaria was treated pretty much as Jerusalem was by Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Jehoiachin. The greater part of the population was allowed to remain in its native land. This is a death-blow to British-Israelism which predicates its entire belief on the ten tribes being scattered throughout the earth.

"Judah also shall fall with them" - It is not the guilty alone who experience the tragedies of guilt. When Hitler fell he did not fall alone, but took Germany with him. When Germany fell she took Europe with her. Whether we like to admit it or not, we are our brother's keeper, and we are being imitated by someone, someplace, somehow. Let us strive to make our example worth imitating.

Verse 6 "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find Him" - Paul speaking to the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 12:14), 'I seek not yours but you...' God's favor cannot be purchased with gold or silver, flocks or herds. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart'. Psa. 51:17; Jer. 29:13; see also John 4:21,24; 2 Tim. 3:5. It was the lack of these principles that made the Pharisees so obnoxious to Christ.

Exhortation: Death or the second coming of Christ can bring our opportunity to seek Him to an abrupt conclusion. There will come a time when many will seek but it shall be too late as in the case of the wise and foolish virgins.

Verse 7 "strange children" - Not the offspring of mixed marriages, but children who have never been trained to know the Lord and as a consequence are strange to him.

"now shall a month devour them" - In a month's time the king of Assyria shall be upon them and they will be required to purchase their lives and liberties by a grievous tax of fifty shekels per head. Cp. 2 Kings 15: 16-20. Some translations carry the idea: 'The locusts shall devour them'. RSV, 'The new moon shall devour', carries the same idea, i.e. that a speedy invasion was impending.

Verse 8 "Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah and the trumpet in Ramah" - Gibeah and Ramah were cities of Judah in the tribe of Benjamin. The cornet was made from a ram's horn, and was used by shepherds. The trumpet was made of brass or silver, and was used in wars and on solemn occasions. There is a strong possibility here of a dual aspect of Christ's work. First, that of a shepherd - Second, that of a warrior; overall of course, redemption.

"After thee O Benjamin" - Benjamin, fly for thy life--the enemy is just behind thee. A prediction of the invasion of Assyria, and captivity of the ten tribes. He is close upon thee, Benjamin, for Bethaven is right at his border, Jud. 5:14--RSV tremble O Benjamin.

Verse 9 "Ephraim shall be desolate" - cold, lost, hollow, cheerless.

"among the tribes of Israel have I made known" - God has always given mankind sufficient warning so there can never be excuses for failure, and this was certainly true with the ten tribed kingdom of Israel.

Noah preached 120 years to keep a nation from perishing.

For ten months the plagues that came upon Egypt warned of impending disaster.

God chose Egypt, the showcase of the then-known world, to exhibit the fact that he was the all powerful deliverer and saviour of mankind.

God chose the rule of the Roman Empire to put our Saviour to death and so the apostle Paul could say as he stood before Agrippa, 'These things were not done in a corner'.

"that which shall surely be" - The coming judgments here fore-told. It is no longer a conditional decree; it is absolute, for Ephraim is hopelessly impenitent. This verse refers to Israel while the next is directed at Judah.

Verse 10 "like them that remove the bound" - Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov. 22:28; Prov. 23:10.

Proverbial for the setting aside of the ancestral laws by which men are kept to their duty. This has special reference to Ahaz and the princes of Judah setting aside the ancient ordinances of God, 2 Kings 16:10-18.

He also burnt his children in the valley of Hinnom after the abominations of the heathen, 2 Chron. 28:3. God will not live in the house until the false weights are removed. If we break the bounds that surround us, then the judgments of God await us.

In the East, advantage was taken, wherever possible of natural divisions such as river beds, tributary streams, or edges of valleys; but in the

open ground boundaries were marked by stones that could be removed.

Flesh challenged even our Master to do the same, as echoed by his words, 'If it is possible, let this cup pass from me'. And then his answer becomes the pattern by which we can gain eternal life, "Not my will but thine be done".

Verse 11 "He willingly walked after the commandment" - This commandment referred to Jeroboam's demand to worship the calves at Dan and Bethel, 2 Kings 10:28-33. Also note Micah 6:16. Many of them performed this worship willingly. They had walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and stood in the way of sinners until now they could sit in the seat of the scornful and enjoy it.

Verse 12 "Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth" - In Scripture both the moth and the worm are employed as destructive powers. The moth destroying clothes, Isa. 1:9; 51:8; Psa. 39:12. These words forcibly describe God's quiet method of destruction. His forceful method of destruction is described as that of a lion. Here, however, this power is described as a moth working out ruin silently, slowly and gradually. The moth is so small that it defies medical detection, and often-times the damage is done before the disease is detected. In many of the seemingly healthy trees of the forest, thousands of insects are noiselessly at work, and then one day, in a storm, the damage is revealed, but too late.

The thing that destroyed the churches of Asia Minor was the moth of worldliness and false doctrine. Our danger today lies in the destructive moth of hate, envy, jealousy, evil speaking, etc. The moth of Scripture with one exception, is confined to the larvae of the little clothes moth, many species of which are found in Palestine.

"to the house of Judah as rottenness" - Here we have pictured a long protracted duration with the certainty and completeness of final destruction by a slow but sure consuming of the moth.

Verse 13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness...then went Ephraim to the Assyrian" - In sickness, whether it be physical or spiritual, we turn to the creature rather than to God. The most difficult thing for man to do is to prostrate himself before the Almighty as did David of old and acknowledge that we are nothing. When both Israel and Judah felt their own weakness to resist their enemies, instead of calling on and trusting in God, they sought sinful alliances with the heathen nations round about and placed their trust in idols. Many in the world today will accept Christ as a great prophet, but only the sick come to him as the great physician.

"king Jareb" - The only place we find this name is here, and in Chapter 10:6. The original is "Yareb" and means avenger--an Assyrian king whom they thought was able to save them from their enemies. In 2 Kings 15 and 16; 2 Chron. 28:16-21, we read that Menahem, king of Israel, sought alliance with Pul and Tiglath-Pileser, kings of Assyria and Ahaz, king of Judah. These were the protectors Israel sought after, but instead of affecting a cure, the wound was made worse.

Verse 14 "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion" - speaks of the suddenness of attack of Assyria upon Israel. Just as a lion carries his prey back to his lair, so Israel shall be carried captive into Assyria.

Verse 15 "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" - I will abandon them till they acknowledge their offences. This had the wished for effect as we shall see in the following chapter for they repented and turned to God and He had mercy upon them.

HOSEA CHAPTER 6

Verse 1 "Come and let us return unto the Lord" - When God abandoned them they found that He had returned to His place--to His temple--where alone He can be sought. Even though He had torn (Chapter 5:14), yet they knew He could heal. If we cut the branch from the vine, it withers and dies. If we isolate the river from its source, it will dry up and be no more. Had there been no wandering from the Lord, there would have been no need for return. Idleness is the parent of vice and this is the reason for the constant exhortation to be active in our Master's service. Let us follow the example of the prodigal son - Luke 15:18.

"for he hath torn, and he will heal us" - Israel's enemies had also torn them, but they could not and would not heal. It is in mercy that God deals with His backsliding children. His chief purpose in smiting and tearing His children is that He ultimately might heal them from curses of mortality. Wherever there is true repentance there will be a returning unto the Lord--but the heart hardened against God, hardens itself still further. This appears to be a hasty resolution from which a full and free confession of sin was fatally absent. There is the attitude that in two or three days all will be well again, and we can continue to live as we see fit.

Hosea had a real insight into the conditions for salvation, and he knew the first was true and sincere repentance, a real crossing over from darkness to light. This insight is probably the reason Hosea is quoted more than any of the minor prophets. More than thirty direct or indirect quotations may be found in the gospels and the epistles. Repentance--this is the starting point. Israel was not conscious of sin and that is why she was not capable of true repentance. When the prodigal son said, I have sinned, he not only said it, but he meant it. This hidden sin was that which evoked the greatest condemnation from Jesus.

Sin is missing the mark, but if there is no mark, how can we know when we miss it? This is the reason Hosea says (4:6) 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge'. It is only as we recover our vision of God, His love, His grace, His holy purposes for our lives, that repentance is possible.

Next in Hosea's formula was "returning". The prodigal son said, 'I will rise and go'. There is a vast difference in waking up and getting up.

Verse 2 "After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight" - From a natural standpoint we have

Israel's Fleshly attitude exhibited--i.e., in two or three days God will forget our sins, and we will be restored to His pleasure. This passage, however, reaches much deeper than this, and carries us into the future that remains for the people of God.

Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah who was delivering much the same message of warning to the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. In chapter 5:14, Hosea records that the Lord will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as we have seen, this had direct reference to their being carried captive by Assyria. We have verification of this threatening in 2 Kings 17:6, 20, 'In the ninth year Hoshea the King of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight'. The casting out of His sight refers to their being cast out of Palestine. This event took place 721 B.C., and fulfilled Hosea 1:4. But even with this there is hope held out in Hosea 1:10, 11. The period between subversion of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and their re-union with Judah when they shall appoint themselves one head or king, was destined to be very long. Hosea 3:4,5.

During this period of time God represents Himself as gone from them--'I will', says He, 'go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face'. Ch. 5:15; Luke 16:26; Romans 11:7, 25.

"after two days" - Two in Scripture carries the idea of division or difference. It is the first number by which we can divide another. So after Israel's two desolation periods, which began in 721 B.C., they have been divided or separated from God as the above passages indicate.

That these are not literal days or single year periods, is proved by the fact that Israel did not return to God. Of necessity then we must look to another formula for the solution and this we find in 2 Peter 3:8, 'But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, as one day'.

Our passage may be thus paraphrased: 'After two thousand years will He cause us to live again in the estimation of the world; in the third period of a thousand years He will raise us up to political consideration, and we shall live again in our own land. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord'. Ezekial 20:33,44.

The phrase "live in His sight" evidently means to live in Palestine. To be "cast out of His sight" (2 Kings 17:20) is to suffer political death, and to be removed from Palestine into the cities of the Medes.

"in the third day" - In Scripture, three stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire. God's three attributes: omniscience, omnipresent, and omnipotence. Three divisions of time: past, present, and future. The sum of human capability is expressed in: thought, word and deed. Three divisions of matter: animal, mineral and vegetable. The earth emerged from its watery grave on the third day. Christ raised three people from the dead. Christ Himself arose on the third day. Christ holds the threefold office of prophet, priest and king. Christ had a three fold appearance:

1. To put away sin, Heb. 9:26
2. To appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9:24
3. He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation, Heb. 9:28

They are to be healed in the third day--not at the beginning of the third day, but in the third day itself. If we add 721 years to 1961, we have 2682 which places past the half-way mark of the third day. This is but another proof of the nearness of our Lord's return.

"day" - In Job 19:25 we read, 'I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand upon the earth in the latter day'. This latter day, is the third day or the millennium. It is the day spoken of in Acts 17:31. It is the day of Christ, 2 Thess. 2:2. It is the day of 2 Peter 1:19, when the day star, the son of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings--see Heb. 3:15. Compare Hos. 8:4; 9:17; 11:5; 13:16; 10:12; 12:9; 13:9,10; 13:12; 13:14; and the final and glorious consummation, Hosea 14:4,7. (It is the last day of John 6:39).

Verse 3 "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord" - We shall have indisputable evidence that we have not followed cunningly devised fables. This will cause Israel to accept their Messiah, Zech. 12:10; 13:6.

It was the lack of knowledge that caused Israel's downfall, so the obvious solution for the problem is to gain knowledge and fill the void. The RSV is probably a better translation, "Let us press on to know". We only know as we press on to know. There is a marked difference between knowing about God, and knowing God. It is comparable to reading about love and falling in love. We first are to gain theoretical knowledge, but this knowledge or word must become our flesh and not only dwell among us, but in us--Christ in us the hope of glory, 2 Peter 3:18; Phil. 3:14; 1 Cor. 13:9; 2 Tim. 1:12.

"if" - This will only be true "if" we press on.

"his going forth is prepared as the morning" - Just as the rays of the rising sun dispells the darkness of night, in the same way the rays of the sun of righteousness obliterate the darkness of sin which covers this earth and ushers in the third day or dawn of Zion's glad morning.

"he shall come to us as the rain" - "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth". (Psalm 72:6)

"as the former and latter rain upon the earth" - This expression was rich in meaning for those in Palestine for the former rain or the early winter rain usually fell in December, softening the hard ground so that the farmer might plow the field and sow the seed. The latter was that which fell in the spring, preparing the full ear for harvest. And so we as spiritual Israel have this beautiful and comforting parallel. Just as surely as the sun is running its course in the heavens preparing to bathe a world of darkness with its glorious penetrating light, in the same way the sun of righteousness shall arise on us with healing in his beams to bring light and happiness upon this earth. In the meantime we have been sustained and cared for by the former and latter rain of blessings that have proceeded from God's throne of grace and mercy.

Verse 4 "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee?" - This is Yahweh's answer to Israel's fickle resolution. A nation so deep in sin and idolatry cannot return to God overnight. Judah was also following in this same idolatrous pattern. The same fraternization with the world that has been the downfall of so many in the past

"your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" - This speaks of Israel's weak spiritual condition that vanished completely under the first exposure to trial. Just as dew is dispelled by the first rays of sun, in the same way, Israel's resolve to return unto the Lord was obliterated because of their intense love for the things of the flesh. God had come to them as a nourisher and a sustainer in the early and latter rain. They in return had come to Him in a nebulous worship of dew which is soon evaporated.

We look forward to that day when the red color of sin shall be removed, and we will become the constituent elements of that white cloud or immortality that shall endure. We are reminded of Jesus' parable in which He speaks of seed sown in shallow soil, Matthew 13:19-23. God's constant exhortation to His children is steadfastness and unswerving loyalty. Revelation 2:10, 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life'. Matthew 10:22, 'And ye shall be hated of all men for my names' sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved'. Luke 9:62, 'And Jesus said unto him, no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'.

Verse 5 "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets" - i.e. I have sent my prophets to testify against their idolatry--through these prophets I have sent threats and warnings--I have given them every opportunity to return to me, but their refusal has been their own destruction.

God has always left the door open for man's repentance--to wit, Noah, the Egyptians, Israel, Judah, Pharisees, Judas, Gentiles, and the nations in the time of the seven thunders. It is the word of God that hews or molds us by the prophets. Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 43:3; Isa. 11:4; Jer. 23:29; Heb.4:12

"thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth" - i.e. God's judgments shall be seen and they shall be swift. We have both the velocity and splendor of light used as the symbol. Eze. 38,39; Joel 3; Zech. 14.

Verse 6 "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice" - God through His word has both shown and taught mercy for He is a God of love. Hosea is here teaching that sacrifice might well be a great outward manifestation of religious zeal, and have no inward spiritual foundation. [God would rather see Israel meek, humble, and with true love in their hearts than to see them offer the best of burnt offerings on the altar.] Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Amos 5:21-24; Isa. 1:11, 14,15; Mic. 6:6-8; 1 Sam. 15:22; Psa. 50:8; 51:16.

"knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" - True and sincere knowledge of God's word will produce that consecrated, and whole-hearted dedication symbolized by the burnt offering. God desires the cause, for the effect will follow just as night follows day.

Verse 7 "But they like men have transgressed the covenant" - Hebrew "Kadam" - like Adam. i.e. they have sinned against light and knowledge just as Adam. The sense of the verse "Adam, in Paradise, transgressed the commandment, and I cast him out: Israel in possession of the promised land, transgressed my covenant, and I cast them out, and sent them into captivity".

Exhortation:

We have been left with the custody of the temple of God--the figurative ten servants of the nobleman, Luke 19:12-15--the custodians of God's temple, 1 Cor. 3:16.

"there have they dealt treacherously against me" - Adam sought to create a duality in God's universe. This has been the basic reason for man's downfall in the past and can be ours today.

Verse 8 "Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity" - This is actually Ramoth Gilead, where Jacob and Laban made their covenant and set up a heap of stones. This was called Galeed, i.e. the heap of testimony--Genesis 31:44-49. It is very possible that this actual heap of stones became the object of superstitious adoration. It was here at the fords of Jabbok that the entire course of Jacob's life was changed.

Shiloh--the city of God, Joshua 18:1; 1 Samuel 4:3. Gilead--capital of Samaria, the city of flesh.

"polluted with blood" This undoubtedly refers to Gilead's complicity in the conspiracy of Pekah against Pekahiah, 2 Kings 15:25. This area had become the center of many, many homicides for the bulk of the cities of refuge were in the vicinity of Ramoth Gilead, Joshua 20:8.

Verse 9 "as troops of robbers" This is a sad but true commentary on the condition to which the priests of Israel had fallen. They took advantage of those fleeing to these cities of refuge and robbed them. They demanded high entrance fees to the city. The idolatrous priests formed themselves into companies and kept possession of the roads and passes. They were so steeped in idolatry that if they found any person going to Jerusalem to worship the true God, they put him to death.

"by consent" Literally with one shoulder. The image is from oxen putting their shoulders together to pull the same yoke.

"for they commit lewdness"--Presumptuous wickedness--deliberate sin--open rebellion against God.

Verse 10 "I have seen an horrible thing" i.e. the idolatry that prevailed in Israel to such a degree that the whole land is defiled. God will not permit a duality in His universe.

"the whoredom of Ephraim"--Idolatry or fraternization with the flesh.

Exhortation: THIS CAN HAPPEN TO US IN A VERY REAL WAY. THE TIME IS SHORT. LET US NOT SLEEP AS THOSE WHO HAVE NO HOPE.

Verse 11 "O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee" This is a harvest of judgements, Jeremiah 51:33; Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:15. It is called a harvest because it is the fruit of the seed which Judah herself hath sown. Hosea 8:7; 10:12; Job 4:8; Proverbs 22:8. Judah under Ahaz lost 120,000 'slain in one day' (by Israel under Pekah), because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers, 2 Chronicles 28:6. Judah hath transgressed--her harvest will come, the sickle is ready to thrust in--that which thou hast sowed shalt thou reap, Galatians 6:7,8.

"when I returned the captivity of my people" - i.e. they who have led Israel into captivity shall lead thee also into the same. The Assyrians and Babylonians were the same kind of people; equally idolatrous, equally oppressive, equally cruel. There was a partial restoration of Judah,

but not of Israel. We look forward, however, with eager anticipation to that day when they shall be joined together as one.

HOSEA Chapter 7

Verse 1 "When I would have healed Israel" Israel and Samaria are synonymous terms. Samaria had become synonymous for idolatry and immorality, Ezekiel 16:53.

As soon as one wound was healed, another was discovered. Scarcely was one sin blotted out till another was committed. All of God's relationships with man are marked by the spirit of mutuality. In the days of Christ we read, "He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief," Matt. 13:58. The healing forces of God cannot operate on the unrepentant. To consciously cherish iniquity is to put an impassable barrier in the stream of God's grace.

That there are healing forces in nature is an uncontrovertible fact. No sooner has the storm spent its fury than the battered and broken trees are coaxed back to life by the gentle action of the sun and rain. The doctor can only put the parts in their proper place and then nature must make the final move. The 23rd Psalm, "He restoreth my soul." By the same token, forgiveness is not a one way street--it is the restoration of a broken relationship. The road between my brother and me has had a washout. The chasm is too broad to be bridged from one side. It makes no difference how far I extend my hand, I cannot reach my brother unless he extends his hand also. This is the same with us and God. Forgiveness is impossible without repentance.

"The thief cometh in" Their own princes spoil them--not only was Israel invaded by the Assyrians, but they had termites, so to speak, within their own ranks.

"the troop of robbers spoileth without" i.e. the Assyrians waste and plunder the country.

Verse 2 "They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness" i.e. They do not consider that my eye is upon all their ways; they do not think that I record all their wickedness; they know not their own evil doings are as a host of enemies encompassing them about.

Anything like genuine repentance is impossible without a consciousness of sin. One cannot be sin conscious who is not God conscious. Sin is a deceitful thing. It becomes as the sound which once frightened us out of our wits, but when heard again and again, no longer bothers us. Like a violin string constantly plucked and never tightened, it becomes incapable of sounding the right note. Sin is missing the mark and that mark has been set by God-- not man.

"now their own doings have beset them about" Israel's indulgence in sin had so hedged them in by things of the flesh that there was no way of escape. Sin can do the same thing to us. Man can become so saturated with flesh that it becomes a malignant incurable disease. OUR MINDS ARE

VESSELS--REST ASSURED THEY WILL BE FILLED--IF WE DO NOT FILL THEM WITH GOD'S WORD, FLESH WILL TAKE OVER.

Verse 3 "They make the king glad" They pleased Jeroboam by coming readily to his way of thinking and heartily joining with him in his idolatry. They professed to be perfectly happy in their change, and the religion of the state was better than that of Jehovah. In this manner they made all their rulers "glad with their lies."

Verse 4 "As an oven heated by the baker" It is thought that Hosea might have been a baker, or at least he was very familiar with the process. Hosea makes a twofold comparison of the Israelites; to an oven, and to dough.

Jeroboam set fire to his own oven (his kingdoms) and put his own leaven in the dough. Of course this is a symbol of the impregnation of Jeroboam's idolatrous teaching into Israel. At first he used no violence, but was satisfied with exhorting them, and proclaiming a feast. This fire spread very rapidly, and the dough was very soon impregnated by the leaven. All Israel was seen running to this feast and partaking in these innovations--See Ex. 13:7; 12:15; 1 Cor. 5:6-8. This is an apt image of the persistence of sin until its final end is accomplished, 2Pet. 2:14.

The heated oven may well symbolize the kind of pleasures so widely sought. These bring only temporary enjoyment--the desire smolders, but soon glows again until finally it burns completely out.

"until it be leavened" Jeroboam did a complete job, he saturated Israel with sin and they came to enjoy it.

Verse 5 "the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine" A more faithful, or a more accurate translation: "The day of our king. The princes have begun with the glowing or fever of wine", and has reference to the celebration of the sovereign's coronation day (or birthday) which commences at an early hour, significant of monstrous excess. See Acts 2:15. They were drinking not only glasses of wine but bottles.

"he stretched out his hand with scorners" The gesture of revellers stretching out the cup in drinking to one another's help--true fellowship.

Verse 6 "They have made ready" i.e. they make their heart approach.

"like an oven" Here we follow out the image of verse 4, as it conceals the lighted fire all night while the baker sleeps, but in the morning burns as a flaming fire. This was deeply symbolical of Israel's sin. This flaming fire is seen in verse 7, i.e. their plans have been held in check like a smouldering fire until their plans have been fully matured.

Verse 7 "all hot"--all burn with eagerness to cause universal disturbances, 2 Kings 15.

"devoured their judges"--as the fire devours the fuel.

"all their kings are fallen" There was a pitiful slaughter among the idolatrous kings of Israel; four of them had fallen in the time of this prophet. Zechariah was slain by Shallum; Shallum by Menahem; Pekahiah by Pekah; and Pekah by Hoshea, 2 Kings 15. All were idolators and came to an untimely death. This blood bath was taken as a matter of course.

"none..calleth unto me"--no semblance of repentance--none seek me, Isa. 9:13; 64:7.

Verse 8 "mixed himself among the people"--by leagues with idolators and adoption of idolatry, Psa. 106:35. See how this same word 'mixed' is used in Ex. 29:40. In the world but not of the world.

"a cake not turned" In the east, having heated the hearth, they sweep one corner, put the cake upon it and cover it again, and continue this several times till they find it sufficiently baked. All travellers into Asiatic countries have noted this. Israel was put under the ashes as a loaf well kneaded and leavened, but not being carefully turned it was burnt on one side before those who prepared it could eat it; and enemies and strangers came and carried off the loaf.

This cake was burnt on one side, and undone on the other--not edible. We too can be half baked. Burnt in the world--undone in the things of God.

Verse 9 "grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not" - symptoms of approaching dissolution. The kingdom has grown old in iniquity--the time of their captivity is at hand, and they are apprehensive of no danger. They are like an old man who takes no thought of approaching death, but seeks for the doctor to cure him. He is under the sentence of death, but does not know it.

Verse 10 "the pride of Israel"--see Hosea 5:5.

"do not return to the Lord for all this"--notwithstanding all their calamities. Let us never forget the prodigal son, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee", Luke 15:18. Few ages have been as sinful as ours and few ages have been as unconscious of sin as the one in which we live. Man always feels there is yet time.

Verse 11 "Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart" A bird that has little understanding--easily snared and taken --careless about its own young--lives without any kind of thought. It has been made by those, like itself, to become unfaithful in all its actions. The dove and its mate are continually quarreling, see Isa. 60:8. This particular reference probably is the incident recorded in 2 Kings 17:3-6.

Israel relied on a balance of power rather than Yahweh. To entangle ourself with foreign alliance is to ask for trouble.

"They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria" They tried to make these their allies, and their friends, but in this they showed their lack of understanding. These were rival nations, and Israel could not attach herself to one without incurring the wrath of the other. Thus like the silly dove

they were constantly falling into snares. By the Egyptians they were betrayed--by the Assyrians they were ruined.

Verse 12 "When they shall go"--To those nations for help--EGYPT, Assyria, etc.

"I will spread my net upon them"--I will cause them to be taken by those in whom they trusted, Psa. 2:4; Dan. 2:21,22; Ezek. 12:13.

"I will bring them down" We have the allusion to the silly dove again, being snared in a trap--a trap of their own making, caused by trusting in flesh rather than God.

"as their congregation hath heard"--There will be no excuse for they have heard my laws constantly in their assemblies--their tainted history stands as a witness to my detestation of idolatry and my wrath against idolators, Lev. 26:14-39; Deut. 28:13-68; 32:15-35; 2 Kings 17:13-18.

Newcome translates thus: "I will chastise them when they hearken to their assembly." i.e. that when they take counsel of their elders to go down to Egypt for help and trust in the arms of the Assyrian for deliverance.

Verse 13 "Woe unto them" - They shall have woe or trouble when they have fled from me--they have deliberately transgressed against me--they shall be destroyed. Our warning: 2 Pet. 2:18-22; Heb. 10:26-32.

"fled" This word is used in relation to the flight of birds, Prov. 27:8; Isa. 16:2.

"though I have redeemed them" This redemption was out of Egyptian bondage--the same bondage from which we have been delivered, Micah 6:4; Eph. 2:11-22; Matt. 2:15. Lit. translated--though I have tried to redeem them.

"yet they have spoken lies against me" They have been unfaithful to me--they have represented me as being rigorous and cruel and my service as painful and unprofitable, Hos. 12:1; Psa. 78:36; Jer. 3:10.

Verse 14 "They have not cried unto me with their heart" God discriminates between a heart cry to him and a howl of despair. They have cried unto me out of a hypocritical heart--their cries have been forced--they have not come from a heart of love and devotion. God is love and can only be approached through a heart of love. God is mercy and can only be approached through a merciful and forgiving heart, Job 35:9,10. This was the reason Christ detested the hypocrisy of the Pharisees as he did. A generation of vipers--whited sepulchres. This is the class that will cry Lord, Lord, but have never given a cup of cold water in his name, Matt. 25:41-46.

"They howled upon their beds"--cry of anguish, not the cry of repentance and faith.

"they assemble themselves for corn and wine" They assemble not to seek me, but for the loaves and fishes. They assemble to invoke their false gods for corn and wine. We must learn that many times God's answer to our

prayer is no.

ad "rebel against me" i.e. not only withdraw themselves, but they rebel against me. We can do the same by praying for deliverance from our besetting sins, but all the while making sure that the path to repeated indulgence is left open. The world prays for peace, yet builds its stock of A-bombs. We pray for forgiveness, but we will not forgive.

Verse 15 "Though I have bound and strengthened their arms" Whether God dealt with Israel in judgement or mercy the result was always the same-- complete and total rebellion.

Verse 16 "They return but not to the most High" They go to their idols.

"They are like a deceitful bow" To thoroughly comprehend the meaning of this passage one must understand the characteristics of the eastern bow. The eastern bow when not in use is curved back in the opposite direction from its action position. The bending of the bow requires strength and skill. If not properly done it can easily injure the archer. Thus it can easily be called a deceitful bow and the proper understanding of this example enables us to comprehend its application to deceitful Israel, and also our deceitful heart which is desperately wicked. They had been trained to shoot straight toward the Lord, but their arrows had gone to Baal.

"the rage of their tongue" This has reference to their boast of safety from Egyptian aid and their lies whereby they pretended to serve God while worshipping idols.

Hosea Chapter 8

Verse 1 "Set the trumpet to thy mouth" The trumpet is an instrument of war and indicates the gravity of Israel's situation (see notes on Hosea 5:8) Ezekiel 33:6, 'But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.' The alarm must be sounded, the danger is imminent. Josh. 24:15; I Kings 18:21; Mark 1:15; II Cor. 6:2; Ezek. 18:31.

"He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord." There is little doubt that this reference is speaking of the invasion by Shalmanezar, King of Assyria. The figure of the eagle speaks of his rapidity, his strength, his ability to destroy. He is represented here as hovering over the house of God as the eagle does over the prey on which he is to pounce. Job 39:30; Deut. 28:49. The eagle preys on corruption and impurities. A fitting example of Israel's condition.

"They have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law."
This is living testimony to Gal. 6:7,8 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

Exhortation: This inexorable law has not changed. It is just as binding today as ever and its violation can mean our eternal and everlasting destruction.

Verse 2 "Israel shall cry" Israel's position is well illustrated by the cowering of the prey of an eagle and the warning is the same to us today, i.e. that Christ's coming will be swift and his judgement upon sin will be speedy and complete. Matt. 24:27; I Thess 5:3.

"My God we know thee" This is the same sentiment from the same sort of persons under the same feelings expressed in Matt. 7:22, 'Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.' Isaiah 29:13; Jer. 22:9; Luke 6:46.

Verse 3 "Hath cast off the thing that is good" We are free agents, standing at the crossroads with the choice of direction our own.

"The enemy shall pursue him" Rom. 7:18-22, 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' Prov. 13:15. Our natural inclinations are to the flesh.

Verse 4 "They have set up kings, but not by me." i.e., not one of the kings of Israel, from the time of the division was anointed of the Lord.

"I knew it not" i.e., it did not have Yahweh's approval so was not known or recognized by Him.

"Of their silver and gold have they made them idols that they may be cut off" i.e., they shall be cut off because of their idolatry and their unfaithfulness; in present day terminology this might read--they made them hydrogen bombs trusting in the strength of man.

Verse 5 "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off"--Lit. Remove far from thee thy calf O Samaria--abandon thy idolatry for my anger is kindled against thee.

"how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?" - i.e. How long will you continue in these evil practices. Isa. 55:7. 'Let the wicked forsake his way.'

The calf or ox which was the object of the idolatrous worship of the Israelites, was a supreme deity in Egypt, and it was there they learned this idolatry. A white ox was worshipped under the name of Apis at Memphis.

Another ox by the name of Mnevis was worshipped at On or Heliopolis. This superstition still prevails in the East. The cow is still a most sacred animal among the Hindoos.

The calf which Hosea denounced was set up in the reign of Jeroboam. The reason is very revealing--a masterful appeal to flesh, 1 Kings 12:28.

Three types of idolatry:

1. Grows out of ignorance, Acts 17:22-23; Isa. 40:19-20.
2. Ignorance plus egotism--such as communism.
3. Knowledge of God, and yet service to other gods, 2 Kings 17:33.

Exhortation: Phil. 3:13; Matt. 7:14

Verse 6 "the workman made it; therefore it is not God" God is the Creator--the source of all. It is an utter impossibility for the created to create the creator. This is conclusive proof against idol worship.

Verse 7 "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" Gal. 6:7,8; 2 Cor. 9:6; Psa. 126:6. As the husbandman reaps the same he has sown, but in far greater abundance--thirty, sixty, one hundred fold; so he that sows to the wind shall have a whirlwind to reap. They that sow the seed of unrighteousness shall reap an harvest of judgment. This is a strong metaphor. All storms are from natural causes--same in the spiritual.

A whirlwind has far reaching affects. It blows seeds far afield--our evil deeds, words, etc. Wind expresses that which is empty and fruitless.

Exhortation: The time to stop is now before the wind becomes an uncontrollable whirlwind.

"it hath no stalk"--it has nothing that can yield a blossom. If it has a blossom, that blossom shall not yield fruit. If there be fruit they shall not enjoy it, for strangers shall eat it--i.e. Israel's labors shall be vain and useless, Prov. 11:29; Ecc. 5:16.

Verse 8 "Israel is swallowed up" Sin had made its inroads and Israel had fallen victim. Israel now had reached the point of no return.

"now shall they be among the Gentiles" They shall go into captivity among those who have no hope, Eph. 2:11-14. The sin was not in going among the Gentiles, but in adopting their ways. Naomi went to Moab, but did not become a Moabite. Paul went to Rome, but did not adopt Roman idolatry. The reason, Gal. 2:20.

"as a vessel wherein is no pleasure"--A vessel that is unclean, soiled and infectious. The allusion is to a rotten, corrupted skin-bottle; a bottle made of goat, deer, or calf hide still commonly used in Asia and Africa. Usually highly ornamented on the outside. Psa. 41:12; Jer. 22:28; 48:38; 31:13; 2 Tim. 2:20.

Jesus uses much the same terminology when he speaks of the Pharisees being whited sepulchres.

- Verse 9 "They are gone up to Assyria" - They have turned to this heathen nation for guidance and not to me. This probably refers to Menahem's application to Pul of Assyria for aid, Hosea 5:13; 7:11.
- "A wild ass alone by himself" - Pliny states that one male wild ass will keep a whole flock of females to himself, and allow no others to approach them. Israel had taken this attitude in complete and stubborn separation from God. A figure of Israel's headstrong perversity, Jer. 2:24.
- "alone by himself" - characteristic of Israel in all ages, Num. 23:9; Job 39:5-8; Ezek. 16:32-34.
- "Ephraim hath hired lovers" - i.e. Israel had become one with the neighboring heathen states, largely of their own free will.
- Verse 10 "For the burden of the king of princes" - i.e. They had become so obligated to Assyria that now they could not withdraw without great difficulty. This particular tribute had been imposed on Israel (under Menahem) by the Assyrian Pul, 2 Kings 15:19-22.
- Verse 11 "many altars to sin" - The Jews in Babylon were not obligated to worship the idols of the country except in the cases specifically called out in Daniel. It was, however, far different in Israel. For many years previous to the captivity, Israel had thoroughly indoctrinated themselves in heathen idol worship. Thus they saw and felt the evil of their idolatry, but were helpless in its clutches. These many altars were in opposition to God's law, Deut. 12:5,6,13,14; 1 Kings 12:30; 13:34. It is not the number of altars that counts, but the quality of these altars.
- Verse 12 "I have written to him the great things of my law" - I have inscribed my laws upon their hearts, but they have been completely ignored. They have no excuse for I have not hidden my truth from them. Deut. 4:6-8; Psa. 19:8; 119:18,72; Psa. 147:19,20.
- Verse 13 "They sacrifice flesh" - They offer to their idols the things which belong to Yahweh. While pretending to offer unto the Lord they eat and drink idolatrously and therefore the Lord will not accept them, See Amos 5:21-24.
- Exhortation: Our worship to Yahweh must be whole hearted and sincere. Our lives must be that of a burnt offering wholly consumed--co-crucified with Christ, Rom. 6:6; Eph. 5:2.
- "they shall return to Egypt" - Literally many of them did return to Egypt after the conquest of Palestine by Shalmaneser, and after the ruin of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. They had in effect, however, returned to Egypt by setting up the worship of the golden calves which were the imitation of the Egyptian Apis.
- Verse 14 "Israel hath forgotten his maker" - They have built temples to other gods. Judah had lost all confidence in the Divine protection and therefore built many fenced cities. However, the fire of God's wrath burnt up both the temples and the fortified cities, Jer. 5:15-31; Micah 5:10-11; 1 Peter 5:7; Isa. 22; Heb. 13:5-6.

HOSEA CHAPTER 9

Verse 1 "Rejoice not" - The heathen nations indulged in orgies during their joyful festivals but the prophet warned Israel--rejoice not--do not imitate the heathens nor serve their idols, do not prostitute your soul and body in practising their impurities. Hitherto Israel, you have acted as a common harlot who goes even to the common threshing places--connect yourself with the meanest in order to get your share of the threshed grain.

"For joy" - It is now harvest time and vintage time. The period of annual vintage festivals, as at Shechem and Shiloh, to which the neighboring villages gathered. The corn is being reaped, the wine press is trodden, the vats are overflowing. It is the time of the feast of tabernacles (that which symbolizes the millennium). Behind this bright picture there looms to the prophet's gaze a sombre background. These words express in bold imagery the prophets scorn for the idolatrous corruption of the people. The bounteous yield of the harvest is called the 'harlot's hire' which lures Yahweh's faithless bride to worship the false deity from whose hands these gifts were supposed to have come. The peoples momentary prosperity is attributed to their idols (see notes on Chapter 2:12; also refer to Jer. 44:17-19).

"Hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor" - Israel's neighbors took part in licentious fertility rites and Israel following them had loved a reward, literally a harlot's hire, upon every cornfloor. The heathen had offered gifts to Baal, the fertility god, to induce him to make the fields fertile and fruitful. Israel had followed their footsteps.

1. The first reason Israel was to rejoice not was that they had turned aside from the Lord. In leaving the truth we leave all happiness behind.
2. The second reason Israel should not and could not rejoice was that she was living at ease in Zion. What is our position in the Master's service, brethren and sisters?
3. The third reason was because they were heaping up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath.
4. The fourth reason they could not rejoice was because they were without hope in the world.
5. The fifth reason was because they were under sentence of condemnation.

"Thou hast gone a whoring from thy God" - Israel's covenant with God was a marriage covenant, by which they were joined to Him as their God, renouncing all others.

When they set up idols and worshipped them, when they fled to creatures for help, and placed their confidence in false gods, they broke the marriage vow and committed spiritual adultery. There were other idolators, but this sin was not in them for they had never experienced this close relationship with Yahweh. The sins of those who have made a profession of religion and relation to God are more provoking to Him than those who sin in ignorance. See Psa. 73:27.

Verse 2 "The floor and the wine press shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her" = The prophet here warns that the threshingfloor and the wine

press shall fail, i.e. efforts to seek blessing from Baal would prove futile because only the Lord can bring blessing upon the fields.

When we make the world and the things of it our idol and portion, it is just with God to deny us support and nourishment. As a man soweth so shall he reap, Gal. 6:7,8. What are the desires of our heart? Psa. 37:4.

Verse 3 "They shall not dwell in the Lord's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria" - The punishment is to be still greater: they shall not remain in the land of the Lord; but shall return to Egypt, the place of enslavement. Every life made captive by sin is in Egypt, Rom. 7:24; Eph. 2:11,12.

In Hosea's time a god was thought of as being attached to the land. Yahweh was Israel's God. Whoever left Israel left his God behind. When David was driven out of Israel he had to serve other gods, 1 Sam. 26:19. 'Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods'.

Naaman the Asyrian, after he had been healed of his leprosy by Elisha, took some earth with him as he left Palestine because he wished to worship Israel's God, 2 Kings 5:17.

Jonah thought by crossing the sea he could escape the presence of Yahweh-- Jonah 1:3. To leave the Lord's land was tantamount to leaving the Lord's blessing. More than that the country to which one went was regarded as unclean, 'they shall eat unclean things in Assyria'.

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This is where we will go if we dare leave the sheepfold and at the judgment seat we will be cast out of the land of the living into Assyria where we can no longer enjoy sweet fellowship with Yahweh. No matter how completely we fail there is hope as long as we have access to the balm of Gilead. As long as we stay in the land we will at least be exposed to clean food, i.e. the word of God. It is certain we will never hear it in the land of Egypt.

The far country to which the prodigal was sent is not a geographical location. It is a spiritual condition. To live in the land of the Lord is to live in harmony with His purposes and in obedience to His laws. (Assyria was to be a second Egypt unto them, Deut. 28:36).

Israel could not participate with these other nations without partaking of food that God had declared to be ceremonially unclean. This land was God's. Israel had not paid the rent and now their lease must be forfeited. This is the counterpart of Adam and Eve being driven from the Garden of Eden.

When Cain was driven out from the presence of the Lord he was a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth and ever after that dwelt in the land of the trembling.

Verse 4 "They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted; for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord".

In exile there would be no wine offerings.

R.S.V. "Their bread shall be for their hunger only" - Not as in the A.V. "bread for their soul", i.e. their captors would have bread to supply their physical needs but they would be cut off from their spiritual food.

Let us always see in the bread of the memorial service those life-sustaining qualities that became ours in our covenant relationship with Christ.

Verse 5 "What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the Lord".

Israel could have no joy because all the joy of such times depended on their reconciliation and acceptance with God. There can never be true joy in our life when we bear in our hearts the sad conviction of our willful and persistent estrangement from God. There is no sunshine on human life when God's smile is hidden.

The feasts referred to here are the (3) great feasts of Israel: Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles. No joy could be in Israel's feasts if the sacrifice had failed to gain acceptance. The great principle laid down in God's law must always be, "Sacrifice before feast". If we stray from God we might well ask ourselves what will we do in the solemn day:

1. The day of personal affliction
2. The day of bereavement
3. The day of death
4. The day of judgment

Verse 6 "because of destruction" - i. e. Palestine would be depopulated. It is a matter of historic record that many exiles took refuge in Egypt in 721 B. C. after the great overthrow of the Northern Kingdom.

This verse also mentions Memphis (present day Cairo) which at that time was the vast city where Apis and Ibis, kings and men, lay by thousands mummified. It was the religious shrine of Egyptian faith from which Israel had been emancipated at the Exodus. This was where many in Israel fled for refuge but they met death. This is where many will flee in the near future when Russia invades the land.

"nettles and thorns" - These would grow over their treasure cities. Thus there would be no place for their idols, silver, etc. Nettles are a symbol of destruction, Isa. 34:13. This emphasizes the truth of David's words to put not your trust in princes, Psa. 146:3, 4.

Verse 7 "The days of visitation are come" - i.e. destruction shall come speedily. They shall have no reason to hope for a long reprieve. The days of recompense are come which they have been so often warned to expect.

The great antitype is on its way--when they say peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, 1 Thess. 5:3.

"Israel shall know that the prophet is a fool" - Israel will know the difference between true and false prophets. They shall know then that the pretenders to prophecy, who flattered them in their sins, and rocked them asleep in their security, and told them that they should have peace, they shall know that these were fools, madmen and not true prophets. A good example of this is Ahab, 1 Kings 22:24.

"for the multitude of thine iniquity" - Because men receive not the love of the truth, but conceive a hatred of it, and by the multitude of their iniquity bid defiance to it, therefore God shall send them strong delusion, to believe a lie.

Such days always come. They come as surely as the dawn though often not as swiftly. There is no escaping God's judgments. The moral deterioration of the individual, the chaos, confusion and insecurity of society, its bleeding wounds, its staggering ills that cry to heaven, are they not often the inevitable result of a course of action displeasing to God and at variance with His will and purpose. This punishment is never vindictive. In God's dealing with man there is never any spite or revenge. The evil days which come are the inevitable results that are obtained when in moral universe men play tricks with the moral laws of God. "Who so breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him". Ecc. 10:8. i.e. we cannot go around breaking the laws of God without being hurt.

PO Imagine how Hosea must have felt. Alone in the midst of a nation that knows not Yahweh, without a disciple or friend, without the solace of domestic affection for even his home was full of shame and sorrow and yet he clings to Israel with inextinguishable love. The doom which he proclaims against his people is the doom of all that is dearest to him on earth. His heart is ready to break with sorrow, his very reason totters under the awful vision of judgment.

Again and again he renews his appeal to the heedless nation that is running headlong to destruction, But it is all in vain. Like a silly dove fluttering in the storm, they turn first to Assyria then to Egypt, but never to Yahweh. Through it all Hosea cries out his words of warning.

Verse 8 "The watchman of Ephraim" - The watchman here referred to is undoubtedly speaking of Hosea.

What more important role could a man play? God's watchman looks out for God's interests, and therefore for man's best interests. Also note: man's best interests are always in line with God's will.

The watchman's work is particularly important when darkness falls for it is then that evil prowls. Evil thrives more in the darkness than in the light. See John 3:19; Luke 12:3; 1 Thess 5:5-8.

The prophet in a sense is peculiar to Israel. Rome had her administrators; Greece had her philosophers, but Israel had her prophets. The true prophets spoke the truth regardless of consequence. An outstanding example of this is found in Micaiah's words to Ahab, 1 Kings 22:8-14.

The secular mind does not see life from a true perspective. It has too many blind spots. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," 2 Cor. 4:4. If we want to know the truth about ourselves or our world we must somehow transcend ourselves and our world and this is something man by himself is unable to do. Yet in many cases men do want the truth, Isa. 21:11, but why would one call out of Seir (Edom). As a part of ancient Arabia no doubt Edom had sorcerers, necromancers and wizards a-plenty. Yet when the men of Edom wanted truth they did not consult this secular mind--they sought the prophet of God who would tell the truth without fear of favor. Because the prophet of God spoke the truth, this verse continues, "A fowler's snare is in all his ways and hatred in the house of his God." That is they are not only going to destruction themselves, but they are a snare to all around.

Men once thought that the heavens they saw were all there was to see. So men think the "truth" they see is all there is to see. The prophet like the modern astronomer has fuller and clearer vision. He does not create truth, he discovers it, and proclaims it. Because men with their limited vision cannot see, they do not believe him.

The effect Jesus had on the Pharisees and the Sadducees is expressed in Luke 23:5, "He stirreth up the people". The Sadducees were not greatly concerned about Jesus' religious ideas. Their hostility was aroused when the truth reached the temple treasury.

Verse 9 "in the days of Gibeah" - This relates to that shocking rape and murder of the Levites' wife and mentioned in Judges 19:16-30. When the whole tribe of Benjamin patronized the villainy, this led to the almost complete annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin. God is saying that every tribe is now as bad as the tribe of Benjamin was then, and can expect the same fate. To join with others in the defense of evil is worse than to stand alone in evil.

Verse 10 "like grapes in the wilderness" - Hosea refers back to Israel's early history. God found his people like grapes in the wilderness. (Isa. 28:4; Jer. 24:2; Mic. 7:1). The traveler rejoices as he comes upon an oasis with its luscious grapes, so God rejoiced over Israel who received his law in the wilderness. In the wilderness they were not precious in themselves, but precious to Him, and pleasant as the first ripe grape to the Lord of the vineyard, Isa. 43:4. He planted them, a choice vine, a right seed, Jer. 2:21.

This speaks of the delight God had put upon them, and in doing them good not for their sakes, but because he loved their fathers. See the great disgrace they put upon themselves. God set them apart for Himself as a peculiar people, but they went to Baal-Peor, joined with the Moabites in sacrificing to that dirty dunghill deity, Num. 25:2, 3.

Note: it is interesting to note that the firstripe fig ripens in June while the rest come to maturity about August. This could well have its counterpart in natural Israel being called first and the Gentiles being called last.

"were according as they loved" - This speaks of Israel's complete consecration to Baal. Israel was a very fitting example of those of whom Isaiah speaks (55:2) Spend money for that which is not bread. Labor for that which satisfieth not--not to use the talent at all is better than to use it for an evil purpose. The Revised Standard Version: "Became detestable like the thing they loved".

Nothing so determines character as that to which a man gives his loyalty and especially his religious loyalty (true religion). When man makes God in his own image his God is very little more than just an enlarged edition of himself.

Verse 11 "Their glory shall fly away like a bird" - The bird's flight is unpredictable, sudden, swift. So the glory of man is of and by itself, an unstable quantity. Man's true glory lies not in man. It is a reflected glory. It springs from his desire to glorify God, 1 Cor. 1:31. The only lasting glory for man is that which he does not seek for himself, it comes as a result of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It is the glory of character disciplined by denial; a spirit inspired by noble ideals; a life lived in brotherly love and illumined by hope and faith. This glory will not end in the grave but will rise triumphant to eternal life. This glory not only flew away from Israel, but will also fly away from us if we handle it carelessly.

Verse 12 "Though they bring up their children yet will I bereave them" - That is children which survived infancy would not reach manhood; woes are pronounced on a people from whom the Lord had departed. His blessing gone, and they were awaiting His judgment. At last they know the cost and how awful it is when God has departed. Deut. 31:17; 1 Sam. 28:15,16; 1 Sam. 4:21.

Verse 13 "Ephraim as I saw Tyrus" - Tyre was strongly situated on a rock in the sea; Samaria was a mountain both strong and pleasant, but the strength and beauty of those cities shall not save them from destruction. The impregnable fortress of Tyre was a conspicuous object in the days of Hosea. Similarly, Samaria was a stronghold which was able to resist prolonged sieges.

"Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer" - RSV "Ephraim's sons as I have seen, are destined for a prey--Ephraim must lead forth his sons to slaughter". i.e. her sons would be led to a slaughter that is largely futile. This is the penalty of war--only the bloom of youth is taken for battle. Fulfilled in the impending overthrow and massacre, 721 B.C.

Verse 14 "Give them O Lord: what wilt thou give" - i.e. it would be far better that they have universal childlessness than that the offspring should experience so terrible a fate. Jesus looking forward and speaking of the fate of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, said much the same (Luke 23:29) "For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck".

Verse 15 "All their wickedness is in Gilgal" - Translated into modern life, the prophet's plea would read thus: "all their wickedness is in the house of God; all their wickedness is after coming from the table of the Lord or after their repeated resolutions and vows". This helps us to realize how a Jew would feel who heard the prophet make this reproach

1. At Gilgal the covenant of circumcision was renewed for the second time since they came out of Egypt. What circumcision was to the Jew--baptism is to us. Circumcision was God's seal or guarantee to the Jews that He would cleanse and deliver them from the taint of Egyptian idolatry. Baptism into Christ opens the door to the very fountain head of mercy from whence our sins may be forgiven, Rom. 8:1.
2. It was at Gilgal they celebrated the passover for the first time after they came out of Egypt. The Lord's supper with all its significance is our passover.
3. It was at Gilgal that God appeared in a most remarkable manner to assure the people of Israel that he would be their deliverer, Josh. 5:13.

Though we are not directly informed of the fact, yet we have reason to believe they had been guilty of some scandalous practices of idolatry in Gilgal, See Hosea 4:15.

"for there I hated them" - Because of their wickedness God determined to drive them out of His house so that they would cease to be a part of the heavenly family, either as sons or servants. As long as Israel dwelt unrepentant in sin she could not enjoy the blessings of God's love. God will now turn them out as unfaithful tenants who pay no rent--as unprofitable servants. Israel had pious words, but no deeds. It is by our deeds that God judges us, (Micah 6:8) "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Luke 6:46, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Matt. 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them".

Matt. 23:14, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in".

Jesus finds no pleasure in a barren life. We would have a veritable revolution in the work of the truth if talk was translated into deeds, or action. If we do not realize this soon, many of us will hear, "I will drive them out of my house".

Verse 16 "Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up" - Once a pleasant and fruitful vine, Israel will become a dry and withered tree, fit for nothing and producing nothing. If perchance any children should be born they will perish; if any should be brought up, they will die, Verse 12; if any contrive to survive, they will be killed by the sword, Verse 13; and any who remain will become wanderers among the nations. To summarize, the prophet is saying that Israel faces complete extinction.

Hosea compares Ephraim to a tree because Ephraim was "withered at the root" (Moffatt). She was blighted, her leaves unhealthy, her trunk undernourished, her branches fruitless. Trees for the most part die not from the branches down, but from the roots up. When the roots are dried up the tree is blighted. In the parable of the barren fig tree the vine dresser said, "let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it...and, if it bear fruit well: and if not, then after that shall it be cut down," Luke 13:8,9. The casual observer is concerned about the fruits; but the vinedresser knows that if there are no roots there will be no fruit. This is so true in our spiritual life. It is interesting to note that the very name Ephraim means "fruitfulness".

Verse 17 "My God will cast them away and they shall become wanderers in the nations". - This prophecy has been confirmed from Assyrian monuments and the entire subsequent history of the bulk of Israel.

Israel still wanders, not becoming a part of any nation, lest they lose their ancient faith by corruption into idolatry or conversion to the truth of God. This curse is in direct opposition to what God originally intended for Israel. They were to be a separate people unto Him. See 2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chron. 5:26.

If we lose God, it is not God that is lost--IT IS US.

HOSEA CHAPTER 10

Verse 1 "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars".

The richer and the more prosperous Israel became, and the more she enjoyed the bounties of nature, the more altars she built and the more elaborately she carved the sacred pillars.

Israel was outwardly prosperous and when a nation is prosperous the institutions of religion feel the effect. Riches can be a blessing but as Jesus warns, the temptations they bring are usually insurmountable. Note these interesting points about a vine:

1. The vine is the most fruitful plant that grows out of the earth.
2. No plant requires so great care as the vine.
3. The vine is the most dependant plant in the world--it is totally unable to underprop itself, it must have props more than any other plant, and therefore nature has given it tendrils by which it

catches hold of anything near it.

4. If it be not fruitful it is the most unprofitable thing in the world.
5. A vine is the most spreading of plants.
6. The vine is the softest and most tender of plants. It is the emblem of peace.

Exhortation: We can have an outside healthy appearance and unless we are producing fruit we are empty vines. Let us beware of the cause of Israel's downfall, 1 Tim. 6:10, "The love of money is the root of all evil".

Verse 2 "Their heart is divided" - i.e. they wish to serve God and mammon, Yahweh and Baal: but this is impossible. Now God will do in judgment what they should have done in contrition.

"break down their altars and spoil their images" - (Note the similarity in the judgment God sent upon Judah, Eze. 21:25-27). These people wanted two irreconcilable things--they wanted to serve God and mammon--they wanted to courteously recognize the existence of Yahweh and then run and kiss the lips of Baal. Solomon wanted to live a life of self indulgence while posing as a servant of God. His offering costly sacrifices, building a magnificent temple, offering a beautiful prayer could not rectify the inconsistency.

King Hiram of Tyre blessed the Lord that Solomon was king and gladly traded with him for some of the materials for building a temple to Yahweh. He also contributed one hundred and twenty talents of gold towards its erection, and yet, in his own country, he dedicated a golden pillar to Jupiter, built the temples of Hercules and Astarte, (the Ashtaroth of the Zidonians) and enriched the shrines of the god and goddess with valuable gifts. Psalms 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts".

Verse 3 "For now they shall say, We have no king" - Moffatt has truly said, "If men have no reverence for the eternal, what is the good of a king".

The people had lost faith in the Lord, so that he was no longer their king. They had forsaken him for Baal. On the other hand they had no confidence in any earthy king or ruler. They had had for years, experience of unstable political conditions. There had been a dismal succession of rulers who played at foreign alliances abroad and at power politics at home.

On the other side of the coin--what good is a king or a president if the people have no sense of responsibility: if honor, honesty, integrity and decency are lacking? It is not how many people a city has that makes the city great, but what sort of people. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom. The foundations can only be as strong as the people who safeguard them. This condition was a full vindication of the threatenings of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 8:19).

Verse 4 "They have spoken words" - Vain, empty, deceitful words.

"swearing falsely" - This refers to the alliance made with strange powers, to whom they promised fidelity without intending to be faithful; and from whom they promised themselves protection and support, notwithstanding God was against them and they knew it. A good example of their undependability is seen in their breaking of their engagement to Shalmanezar, 2 Kings 17:4.

"judgment springeth up as hemlock" - Our land lies without cultivation so that we have weeds instead of crops. All of this may refer to the anarchy that was in the kingdom of Israel before Hoshea's reign and which lasted according to archbishop Usher, nine years. They then literally had no king.

The hemlock or the poppy was a poisonous plant. They came in abundance. A very appropriate symbol of sin as a man soweth that shall he also reap, Gal. 5:7,8.

Verse 5 "The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven" - Only a soul as pure and passionate as that of Hosea could see truth so clearly and voice it so vividly as does this man.

A caricature of true religion is given to us in Phil. 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say rejoice". Also Neh. 8:10, "The joy of the Lord is your strength", if we are worshipping the God spoken of in Eph. 3:20, the one who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. What a picture--the priesthood trembling before a God whose glory has departed. They worshipped a god whose worshippers had to be alarmed for its safety. God disowns them saying they belong to it, not to me.

The "priests" refers to the corrupted priesthood. Bethel means house of God; Beth-aven means house of iniquity. The word "rejoice" is in reference to a ritual dance performed by the idolatrous priests, during which they implored their idol to save them and himself.

Verse 6 "A present to king Jareb" - If this be a proper name, the person intended is not known in history; but it is most likely that Pul, king of Assyria, is intended, to whom Menahem, king of Israel, appears to have given one of the golden calves, to insure his assistance. Israel would learn at last the futility of setting up a dumb idol as the protector of a nation. The idol is so weak and helpless it has to be carried. How different the thought of Psa. 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee". (thee, not it!)

Verse 7 "her king is cut off as the foam" - As lightly as a puff of wind blows off the foam that is formed below by a fall of water so shall the kings of Israel be cut off. Chapter 7:7 speaks of this.

He is represented as a helpless fragment of wood being carried downstream by the onrushing tide of water. Foam denotes speedy dissolution, short lived existence. This is certainly a timely description of the kings of Israel after the revolt from David. One cannot help recalling Hitler, Mussolini, Tojo.

Verse 8 "The high places of Aven" - Those were the idol temples of Beth-aven. Beth-el means the house of God--because of iniquity this word was changed to Beth-aven, meaning the house of vanity. Now we read of Aven simply meaning vanity--truly a story of deterioration.

"the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars" - This would be fulfilled because of their being carried into captivity. Luke 23:30, "And they shall say to the mountains, cover us, and to the hills, fall on us".

This could very well have had a dual application. Jesus could have been looking to the past as well as the future. Remember this was the curse that sprang from the garden of Eden. So terrible shall be the calamity, that men shall prefer death to life, Rev. 6:16; 9:6.

Verse 9 "thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah" - This is another reference to the horrible rape and murder of the Levite's wife. Judges 19:13,14.

"there they stood" - Only one tribe was nearly destroyed, namely that of

Benjamin, they were the criminals, the children of iniquity; the others were faultless, and stood only for the rights of justice and mercy.

Verse 10 "When they shall bind themselves in their two furrows"

When they are chastised for their two iniquities, i.e. the calves in Dan and Bethel. This double iniquity may also refer to what Jeremiah says, Chapter 11:13, "My people have committed two evils". 1. They have forsaken me; 2. They have joined themselves to idols.

Verse 11 "Ephraim is as a heifer that is taught" - One thoroughly broken into the yoke. What Hosea is saying is that sin greatly increases the burden of life. Israel when obedient to God and anxious to do His will, was like a heifer on the threshing floor. The work was not burdensome. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light". (Matt. 11:29,30) The yoke of sin always seems more pleasant, but Proverbs 23:32 says, "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder". In Christ we are hitched to him. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me".

"and loveth to tread out" - Goes peaceably in the yoke; and is pleased because not being muzzled, she eats of the corn.

"I passed over upon her fair neck" - I brought the yoke upon it, that she should not tread out the corn merely, but drag the plow and drag the harrow. No heavy yoke was placed on Israel. Their God was a merciful God.

"Judah shall plough-Jacob shall break his clods" - Israel very frequently made great depredations on Judah; and as this heifer loved to tread out the corn and not plough, it is therefore added that he should be made to plough be put under the Assyrian yoke. Drawing, ploughing and breaking up the soil are laborious tasks compared with the easier work of threshing.

Verse 12 "Sow to yourselves in righteous" - Let the seed you sow be of the best kind and in just measure-Hosea reminds the people that there is still time to seek the Lord if they do it earnestly.

"reap in mercy" - By the blessing of God on this ploughing, sowing and harrowing, you may expect a good crop in harvest. What comfort comes from Jonah 3:1, "And the word of the Lord came a second time". It may go unheeded the first time, but each time it comes again. Psa. 103:17, "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children". Psa. 106:1, "Praise ye the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever".

"break up your fallow ground" - Do not be satisfied with a slight furrow; let the land that was fallowed (slightly ploughed) be broken up again with a deep furrow.

The fallow ground is the heart of man. It must be broken, humbling oneself, completely renovating the soil in preparation for planting. Fallow ground is uncultivated earth. It receives the sun, the rain, but to no avail; so is the unregenerate man. Are we growing? Break up the fallow ground.

"For it is time to seek the Lord" - This should be done immediately; the season is passing and if you do not get the seed in the ground, the early rain will be past and your fields will be unfruitful. We shall never be saved without them. No efficient farmer lets the season for planting get away from him. How are we to seek the Lord? 1. By repentance;

2. A heart broken from sin; 3. Reformation of life; 4. Constant prayer.

SEEK HIM NOW WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND!

"rain righteousness upon you" - God will give you the early rain in due time, and in proper measure. Here are the metaphors and the application is obvious. Note the order: ploughing, fallowing, sowing, harrowing, watering, reaping, threshing and feeding on the produce of well directed labor. All may be applied to the human heart and the work of God upon it. Correction, contrition, conversion, fruit-bearing, etc. Although Israel needed material blessings, Hosea emphasizes the need of spiritual food. This rain can become comparable to that which falls on a duck's back--it can roll off and become a devastating flood. Forgiveness is a two way street. Break up the fallow ground.

Verse 13 "Ye have ploughed (plotted) wickedness" - Ye have labored sinfully.

"ye have reaped iniquity" - The punishment due to your iniquity.

"ye have eaten the fruit of lies" - Your false worship and your false gods have brought you into captivity and misery.

"because thou didst trust in thy way"--Didst confide in thy own counsels, and in thy mighty men, and not in the God who made you.

Verse 14 "shall a tumult arise" - The enemy shall soon fall upon thy people and take all thy fortified places.

"Shalman"--may well be Shalmaneser.

Verse 15 "So shall Bethel do unto you" - This shall be the consequence of your idolatry.

"in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off" - Suddenly, unexpectedly, Hoshea, the king of Israel shall be cut off by the Assyrians. The northern kingdom and its succession of rulers was to come to an end forever with the fall of Samaria (722B.C.).

CHAPTER 11

Verse 1 "When Israel was a child" - In the infancy of his political existence.

"I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" - Where he was greatly oppressed (slaves), and in this I gave proof of my love. I preserved my people in their affliction there and brought them safely out of it.

Moses to Pharaoh: "let my son go that he may serve me". "Out of Egypt have I called my son", has become a fixed law in the plan of God.

1. Egypt symbol of flesh, darkness, sin;
2. Israel's physical deliverance (a type);
3. Jesus delivered out of Egypt (firstfruits);
4. Baptism our deliverance out of Egypt;
5. Eternal life will be our individual deliverance;
6. Abolition of sin and death will be the world's deliverance.

Verse 2 "The more they called them" - i.e. the prophets--the more Israel turned their obstinate hearts and refused to obey the Lord.

"they sacrificed unto Baal" - The cult worship of the Baals claimed the loyalty of Israel.

- Verse 3 "I taught Ephraim also to go" - An allusion to a mother or nurse teaching a child to walk, directing it how to lift its feet and step, always supporting it in the meantime by the arms that it may use its feet with greater ease. Deut. 33:27, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them".
- "they knew not that I healed them" - Israel did not realize that the Lord was her healer. She took his blessings for granted, ascribing them to Baal and other deities. They looked to Moses and Aaron, not through to the source. Everywhere we see the gospel of love and mercy.
- Verse 4 "I drew them with the cords of a man" - This is a reference to leading strings, one end of which is held by the child, the other by the nurse; by which the little one, feeling some support and gaining confidence, endeavors to walk. God, their heavenly Father, made use of every means and method to teach them to walk in the right and only safe path. Note: God leads--He does not drive. When Israel was under Pharaoh they were in the grip of steel. They had no room for true expression. Man can only express himself through love.
- "that take off the yoke on their jaws" - I did everything that mercy could suggest and justice permit, to make their duty their delight and profit. In the Hebrew there is an allusion here to the farmer pulling the collar or the yoke forward to let in the cool air between it and their neck. An appropriate reference to God's deliverance of Israel out of Egyptian bondage--also appropriate to our deliverance from the bondage of sin.
- "and I laid meat unto them" - i.e. giving them at the same time a bite of grass or hay to encourage them to go on afresh. All of these things speak of the many privileges, advantages and comforts God provided to make Israel a happy people
- Verse 5 "He shall not return into Egypt" - I have brought them out once already with the vow that the nation should never return thither again. They have sinned and forfeited my favor and protection--they shall go to Assyria. They shall return to a condition much worse than that from which they were delivered. The same can happen to us if we are unfaithful.
- Verse 6 "The sword shall abide on his cities" - Israel was agitated with both external and internal wars from the time of Jeroboam the second. Although Zechariah his son reigned twelve years, yet it was in continual trouble. He was at last slain by the rebel, Shallum, who having reigned one month was slain by Menahem. Pekahiah succeeded his father, Menahem, reigned two years and was killed by Pekah, son of Remaliah. He joined Rezin, king of Syria, and made an irruption into the land of Judah; Ahaz having obtained succour from Tiglath-Pilezer, king of Assyria. Pekah was defeated, and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh were carried away captives by the Assyrian king. In a short time after, Hoshea son of Elah, slew Pekah and usurped the kingdom, which he could not possess without the assistance of Shalmaneser, who for his services imposed a tribute on the Israelitish king. Wishing to rid himself of this yoke he applied to the king of Egypt. When this was made known to Shalmaneser, he came against Samaria, and after a three-year siege, took and destroyed it. Thus the sword rested on their cities. It continued in the land till all was ruined.
- Verse 7 "bent to backsliding from me" - The word rendered backsliding is literally turning or turning about. Instead of turning to God, Israel persisted in turning from Him. This is rebellion--blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Those who will not return to the duties they have left cannot hope to return to the comforts they

have lost.

"though they called them to the most high" - This is a reference to the prophets whose ministry was rejected by Israel.

Verse 8 "How shall I give thee up" - The cry is heart-rending. God had loved His people, yet justice demanded that they should be punished. Since God could not forget the earlier days of Israel's faithfulness, He decreed judgment with great reluctance. This is the cry of a parent for its child.

"mine heart is turned within me" - Justice demands thy punishment; mercy pleads for thy life. This verse shows how merciful, compassionate and how loathe to punishment our God is.

Verse 9 "I will not execute" - Mercy triumphs over judgment. Ephraim shall be spared. Israel was not forever to be cast off even though she was to be sorely chastised.

"I am God and not man" - He cannot be affected by human caprices, they are now penitent and implore mercy; He will not, as man would do, punish them for former offenses, when they have fallen into His hand.

Verse 10 "They shall walk after the Lord" - They shall discern the operations of His providence.

"he shall roar like a lion" - (Joel 3:16) The people shall tremble, be in a state of commotion; every one hurrying to avail himself of the opportunity to return to his own land.

Verse 11 "They shall tremble as a bird" - Those of them that are in Egypt shall also be called thence and shall speed hither as a bird. Those in Assyria shall also be called to return and they shall flee as doves to their windows. All shall, in the fullness of time, return to their own land.

"and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord" - They shall have their temple once more and their holy ordinances.

Verse 12 "Ephraim compasseth me about with lies" - They not only seek to blind men, but they would; if it were possible, deceive me, saith Yahweh.

"Judah yet ruleth with God" - There is an allusion here to Genesis 32:24, where Jacob, having wrestled with the angel, had his name changed to Israel, one that rules with God: That glory the Israelites had lost by their idolatry, but Judah still retained the true worship, and alone deserved the name of Israel.

CHAPTER 12

Verse 1 "Ephraim feedeth on wind" - Literally, shepherds the wind. i.e. he forms and follows empty and unstable counsels, such as, alliances with idols and idolators. The figure is that of sowing to the wind and reaping the whirlwind. We are what we eat.

"followeth after the east wind" - They are not only empty, but dangerous and destructive. The east wind was and is a parching, wasting and injurious wind. It was not only vain but dangerous to look to the east for help. Israel sought after this destructive wind when they could have dwelt under the protective shadow of God.

"he daily increaseth lies" - He promises himself safety from foreign alliances. He made a covenant with the Assyrians and the Egyptians. The latter abandoned him; the former oppressed him, Isa. 30:1-7; 47:9.

- Verse 2 "The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah" - The rest of the prophecy belongs both to Judah and Israel. He reproaches both with their ingratitude and threatens them with God's anger. In order to make their infidelity the more hateful, and their malice the more sensible, he shows to them the righteousness, obedience and piety of their father Jacob. He recalls to their minds the benefits they had received since they returned from Egypt. He speaks afterwards of their kings; and how in their ingratitude they refused to have him for their monarch.
- Jerusalem was destroyed as violently as was Samaria.
- Verse 3 "He took his brother by the heel" - This has reference to the birth of Jacob, Genesis 25:26. So spiritual Israel lays hold of the heel of Jesus. Having no right in themselves to the inheritance they lay hold of the bruised heel (Gen. 3:15) of Jesus who is not as Esau, a curse, but by becoming a curse for us, is a blessing to us, Heb. 12:16-29.
- Verse 4 "He had power over the angel" - This was at the fords of Jabbock--the changing point in Jacob's life, Gen. 32:22-32. This was where Jacob was broken.
- "he wept and made supplication" - He entreated with tears that God would bless him and he prevailed.
- "he found him in Bethel" - It was there that God made those glorious promises to Jacob, relative to his posterity, Gen. 28:13-15.
- "there he spake with us" - These promises relate to all of us today who will put their hope and trust in him.
- Verse 5 "The Lord is his memorial" - He is the same God as when Jacob so successfully wrestled with Him, and He will be the same source of protection for us today if we hold on to Him.
- Verse 6 "Therefore turn thou to thy God" - Because He is the same and cannot change. Seek Him as faithfully and as fervently as Jacob did and you will find the same merciful and compassionate being.
- Verse 7 "He is a merchant" - (Canaan) or a Canaanite; referring to the Phoenicians, famous for their traffic. Living like her Canaanite neighbors, Israel had become proud and arrogant. She did not realize that her life had become marked by sin.
- "the balances of deceit" - Ephraim is as corrupt as they--he has kept a heavy weight to buy with and a light one to sell by. The only way to get the false balances out of the hands of man is by removing the falseness out of his heart.
- Verse 8 "I am become rich" - They boasted in their riches, notwithstanding the unjust manner in which they were acquired.
- "in all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me" - This is frequently the language of merchants, tradesmen, etc. None are so full of professions of equity and justice, while all the time they are endeavoring to overreach both in buying and selling--to wit, "I can't afford it at that price--it cost me more than you are offering," etc., etc.
- We have all heard such talk when we knew that every word was false. Truth is a sacred thing in the sight of God; but who regards it as he should?
- Verse 9 "And I that am the Lord thy God" - I who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, will again make thee to dwell in tabernacles. This has a dual meaning.

God is not only threatening Israel in reference to their being carried into the desolation of Assyria, but He is also pointing forward to the day of their redemption in the feast of tabernacles.

"dwelling in tabernacles" - Partially fulfilled in the return from Babylon, Neh. 8:17-- fully and anti-typically to be fulfilled at the final restoration from the present dispersion.

- Verse 10 "I have also spoken" - I have used every means, and employed every method to instruct and save you. I have sent prophets who spoke plainly, exhorting, warning and beseeching you to return to me. They have had divine visions which they have declared and interpreted. They have used similitudes, symbols, metaphors, allegories, etc., in order to fix your attention and bring you back to your duty and interest. But all has been in vain-- you have not profited by my condescension. The writer to the Hebrews undoubtedly had this in mind when he wrote Hebrews 1:1, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets". Note: number three, 1. "I have spoken"; 2. "I have multiplied visions"; 3. "and used similitudes".
- Verse 11 "iniquity in Gilead" - Gilgal and Gilead are equally iniquitous and equally idolatrous. Gilead which was beyond Jordan, had already been brought under subjection by Tiglath-Pileser. Gilgal, which was on this side of Jordan shall share the same fate because it is now as idolatrous as the other.
"their altars are as heaps" - i.e. they occur everywhere--the whole land is given to idolatry.
- Verse 12 "Served for a wife" - Seven years for Rachel. Let them remember not only what a mighty prince Jacob was with God, but what a servant he was to Laban.
"for a wife he kept sheep" - Seven years for Leah; having been cheated by Laban who gave him first Leah instead of Rachel; and afterward made him serve seven years more before he would confirm his first engagement. Thus in a detached sentence the prophet speaks of the low estate of their ancestors and how amply the providence of God had preserved and provided for them. But in all this, hope is held out; through all those years with Laban God cared for Jacob, and ultimately brought him back to Canaan. This is true in regard to God's plan for Israel.
- Verse 13 "By a prophet (Moses) the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet (Joshua) was he preserved" - Joshua succeeded Moses and brought the Israelites into the promised land. When they passed the Jordan at Gilgal they received the covenant of circumcision and yet this same place was now made the seat of idolatry.
- Verse 14 "Therefore shall he leave his blood upon him" - The same thought is expressed by our Master, John 3:36; 9:41, "He that believeth not on the son of God, shall not see life for the wrath of God abideth on him". God will not condone rebellion; whoever despises the message of God will perish.
One thing is certain: failure to hear and see does not shield us from the impending doom. Failure to heed the handwriting on the wall will not halt the destruction of Babylon.

CHAPTER 13

- Verse 1 "When Ephraim spake trembling" - i.e. when he was meek and humble, of a broken heart and contrite spirit.
"he exalted himself in Israel" - He became great in God's sight; he rose in the divine estimation in direct proportion as he sank in his own, but this did not continue.
"he offended in Baal" - he became an idolator.
"he died" - The sentence of death from divine justice went out against him.
- Verse 2 "And now they sin more and more" - They increase in every kind of vice having abandoned the great inspirer of virtue. Let men apostatize from God and there is no stopping. Every act of sin tends to increase habit.
"Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves" - This was to be the real test. If there was a Jew that pretended to sacrifice and whose conversion was dubious, let him come openly and kiss the calves. This will show what he is, for no real Jew would do this. The steps in which a man worshipped the idol were: 1. They kissed the idol; 2. When the stature was too high or too far off, they presented the hand in token of alliance; 3. They brought that hand respectfully to their mouths and kissed it. This was the genuine act of adoration.
- Verse 3 "Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, as the early dew...as the chaff...as the smoke" - Four things, most easy to be driven about and dissipated are employed here to show how they should be scattered among the nations and dissipated by captivity.
- Verse 4 "I am the Lord thy God" - This was the first revelation I made unto you at the burning bush. This was the first commandment I gave unto you and I showed you that beside me there was no saviour.
- Verse 5 "I did know thee" - I loved thee and by miraculously providing for thee in the land of drought, I demonstrated my love. God knows us and provides for us in the wilderness today. He knows us in our distress. God has commanded us, in everything by prayer and supplication to make known our requests to Him.
- Verse 6 "According to their pasture" - They had a rich pasture and were amply supplied with every good. They became exalted in their heart, forgot their God, and became a prey to their enemies. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 18:14). Many times Israel would turn their sheep into pastures that had become poisoned because of diseased sheep. The result was diseased herds and many times dead sheep. Let us be careful what we feed upon.
- Verse 7 "I will be unto them as a lion" - Lion here is from "shachal" and refers to the black lion frequently found in Ethiopia.
"as a leopard" - From the Hebrew "namar", so termed from its spotted skin.
"will I observe them" - The leopard, tiger, and panther will hide themselves in thick bushwood, near where they expect any prey to pass; and as soon as it comes near, spring suddenly upon it. i.e. they shall be greatly harrassed even on their way to Assyria, when going into captivity.
- Verse 8 "As a bear that is bereaved of her whelps" - This is a figure to denote excessi-
ferocity (2 Sam . 17:8). These animals are in each of us and must be kept

chained at all times (Rom. 7:21, 23; Matt. 15:19). There is a day coming when these shall be subdued. Isaiah 35:9, "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

"and will rend the caul of their heart" - Every savage beast goes first to the seat of the blood when it has siezed its prey because in this fluid they delight more than in the most delicate parts of the flesh.

"there I will devour them like a lion" - Lion here is from the Hebrew "labi" and means "the old strong lion". Drinking blood, tearing the flesh, and breaking the bones to extract the marrow.

"the wild beast shall tear them" - This probably refers to the jackal who frequently hunts down the prey, which the lion takes the liberty to devour while the jackal stands by, and afterwards picks the bones. This is the reason he is called the lion's provider and the lion's waiting man. These metaphors speak of the ferocity of the punishment to be inflicted by the Assyrian.

Verse 9 "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself" - God is telling them that these punishments will be brought about because of their own actions. We can destroy ourselves by leaving the care of the great physician and following the fleshy desires of the world.

Note: We bring trouble on ourselves by the violation of God's laws.

"but in me is thine help" - Though thou hast destroyed thyself, yet in me alone can thy help be found--I am the resurrection and the life.

Verse 10 "Give me a king and princes?"- This is referring to the time in which they had cast off the divine theocracy and chose Saul in place of Yahweh. It could also refer to the kings of the northern kingdom beginning with Jeroboam I.

Verse 11 "I gave thee a king in mine anger" - Such was Saul; for they highly offended God when they clamoured to have a king like the heathen nations around them.
"took him away in my wrath" - I permitted him and the Israelites to fall before the Philistines.

Verse 12 "The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up" - It is registered in the court of justice. The death warrant is in store and will be produced in due time, though there be not at present the judgment inflicted which such glaring transgressions demand, yet it will surely come. Such crimes cannot be unpunished.

Verse 13 "The sorrows of a travailing woman" - i.e. these judgments shall come suddenly and unavoidably. This same simile is used in reference to the second coming of Christ.

"the place of the breaking forth of children" - As there is a critical time in childbirth in which the mother in hard labor may with sedatives and skilled doctors be relieved of much suffering and danger; so there was a time when Ephraim might have returned unto God, but they would not, therefore they are now in danger of finally being destroyed, Matt. 24:8; 1 Thess. 5:3; Mark 13:8.

Verse 14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave" - In their captivity they are represented as being dead and buried. Much the same picture is given

of Judah by Ezekiel in his 37th chapter. The gracious purpose of God shall not be defeated.

"I will redeem them from death" - Israel shall live--I will fulfill my promise to the fathers. Once purified you shall have hope for eternal life. See Zech. 13:8,9; 12:6-14; Jer. 33:6-11; Micah. 4:4-7.

"repentance shall be hid from mine eyes" - on these points I will not change my purpose, Psa. 89:34-37; Jer. 33:20-22.

Verse 15 "Though he be fruitful" - It is too late now Israel--you have had your chance and even though life should manifest itself in the vine, it will not prevent Shalmaneser, king of Assyria from bringing desolation upon you and your land.

"an east wind shall come" - Just as the east wind parches and blasts all vegetation, so shall Shalmaneser blast and destroy the Israelitish state.

The desolation will not be temporary, so that next year new plants can be set out, for the ~~every~~ springs will go dry--the source of fertility will be destroyed. Not only for agriculture, her rivers, her springs, her commercial power, her wealth and her costly treasures, but human life also.

Warning: This is a picture of the coming judgments of God.

Verse 16 "Samaria shall become desolate" - This was the capital of the Israelitish kingdom. These words simply speak of its complete and total destruction.

CHAPTER 14

Verse 1 "O Israel return unto the Lord" - Now the prophecy projects itself into the future. This verse speaks to us of a God who is abundant in mercy--ever-ready to draw near unto those who genuinely repent and turn again to Him.

The trouble with you, Israel, is that somewhere along the way you got smart and thought you could go it alone; you wanted to run your own show; but the truth is that you are not able to. The prodigal son said, "I will arise and go to my father". Luke 15:17-19.

Verse 2 "Take with you words" - That is my words which I put in your mouth--not those of flesh and the heathen idols.

Note the seven steps outlined here.

1. Hearing these merciful invitations, believe them to be true.
2. Cast aside your idols; and return to God as your maker, king and saviour.
3. Take with you the words by which you have been encouraged and plead them before God.
4. Remember your iniquity, deeply deplore it and beg of God to take it all away.
5. Faithfully receive what God waits to impart--when thou hast emptied us of evil, fill us with goodness.
6. Having thus been cleansed let us determine to live unto His glory, rendering sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, gratitude and the hearty obedience our lips have promised.
7. Having thus determined, specify your resolutions to depend on God alone.

for all that can make you wise, useful, holy and happy.

Verse 3 "Asshur shall not save us" - We will neither trust in, nor fear, this rich and powerful king. We will not look to either riches or power for true rest and peace of mind.

"we will not ride upon horses" - We shall no longer fix our hopes on the proud Egyptian cavalry to deliver us out of the hand of enemies. We will expect no rest, satisfaction or happiness from the things of the flesh.

The Arabs have a beautiful description of friendship. "A friend", they say, "is one to whom one may pour out all the content of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away".

"neither will we say anymore to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods" - We will not trust in anything or anyone but Yahweh. He will know that we have nothing but that which we have received from thee.

"for in thee the fatherless find mercy" - We are helpless, desolate, perishing orphans until we are translated into thy family.

Verse 4 "I will heal their backsliding" - Here we have the answer of God to their prayers. Compare Jer. 3:22.

1. "Ye have backslidden and fallen" and are grievously and mortally wounded by that fall, but I, who am the author of life and who redeem from death, will heal all these wounds and spiritual diseases. Compare Hos. 14:1, 4:16.
2. "I will love them freely" Hebrew "nedabah" after a liberal princely manner. Not merely love of affection, but a beneficial love. A love that will fill them with delight, making them supremely happy.
3. "For mine anger is turned away from him" Because he has turned back to me. Thus God and man become friends.

It is not enough for God to forgive our sins, we must forsake them.

Verse 5 "I will be as the dew unto Israel" - The blessings that will accrue to Israel are likened to that refreshment which copious dews give to the grass in summer.

If we consider the nature of the climate, and the necessity of dew in so hot a country, not only to refresh but to preserve life; If we consider also the beauty of the oriental lilies, the fragrance of the cedars which grow upon Lebanon, the beautiful appearance the spreading olive trees afford the exhilarating coolness caused by the shade of such trees and the aromatic smell exhaled by the cedars; we shall then partly understand the force of the metaphors employed here by the prophet. This joy is that which is also reserved for spiritual Israel.

"he shall grow as the lily" - The lily in Palestine is not only beautiful but prolific. In the day of Israel's redemption it can be truly said, "Let the beauty of the Lord God be upon us". Sin takes the bloom from us, but one of these days sin will be removed and the desert shall blossom as the rose.

Verse 6 "his branches shall spread" - He will not be like the seed, cast in the shallow soil, but well rounded. See Matt. 13:32; 13:23; Rev. 22:2.

Verse 7 "They that dwell under his shadow shall return" - (Psa. 91:1) The Targum reads, "They shall be gathered together from the midst of their captivity; they shall dwell under the shadow of his Christ, and the dead shall revive".

"they shall revive as the corn" - The beauty of this metaphor is not generally perceived. After the corn has been a short time above the earth in a single spike, the blades begin to separate and the stalk to spring out of the center. The side leaves turn back to make way for the protruding stalk; and fall bending down to the earth, assuming a withered appearance, though still attached to the plant. To look at the corn in this state no one acquainted with the circumstance could contain any hope of a copious harvest. In a short time other leaves spring out; the former freshen, and begin to stand erect and the whole seems to revive from a vegetative death. This is but another example God has given us from nature to show resurrection as the gospel hope.

Verse 8 "What have I to do anymore with idols?" - When Israel (12 tribes) are at last purified and redeemed, they with the world will see the utter futility of worshipping anyone but Yahweh.

"I am like a green fir tree" - No longer will Israel be dead, they shall reflect the life that is to be given to the dry bones of Ezek. 37. They shall experience the joys spoken of in Psa. 1:3.

"From me is thy fruit found" - Israel will at last be the fruit bearing vine and this thought is beautifully expressed in Zech. 8:23. Remember that we cannot project God as long as we are filled with flesh.

Verse 9 "Who is wise and he shall understand these things?" - The things which relate to the backslidings, iniquity and punishment of Israel--and to the mercy, forgiveness and the promised restoration. The things which belong to the works of sin--the things which belong to the mercy in Christ.

"prudent, and he shall know them" - He who seeks to understand them. Who puts his whole energy to seeking them out--such a person shall obtain wisdom, James 1:5.

"for the ways of the Lord are right" - This is the grand conclusion of the prophet. All God's conduct both in the dispensation of justice and mercy is right; all as it should be, all as it must be; because he is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. The same sun softens wax and hardens clay.