

Introduction*

1. It is still true that “all the world loves a lover,” and in Hosea we are confronted with the champion of all literature.
 - a. His love was so strong that the vilest behavior of his wife could not dull it.
 - b. His wife, Gomer, broke his heart with her unfaithfulness, but gave him an opportunity to illustrate God’s love for man.
 2. He suffered severely; but in each pang of suffering he came to know the love of God more fully.
 3. Hosea was the last of the great prophets of the doomed northern kingdom, Israel.
 - a. He was busy prophesying for many years just before the fall of Israel in 722 B.C.
 - b. Hosea 3:4 **“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.”**
- I. Conditions When Hosea Prophesied.**
- A. Outwardly:
1. It was an era of peace, plenty, prosperity, luxury.
 2. They say, **“I am become rich, I have found me out substance”** (12:8).
- B. But inwardly:
1. They had drifted thoughtlessly into ease, extravagance and oppression, indulging in the kind of living that weakened and debauched them.
 2. Hosea saw signs of decay, poison in the blood stream, and the inevitable calamity ahead.
- C. We may use seven steps to describe their downfall.
1. Lack of knowledge (4:6).
 - a. As the Gentiles (Rom. 12:1ff).
 - b. Do you wonder why the church continually urges Christians to study, attend classes and services?
 - c. Their sins stole their hearts from God (4:1). This is the inevitable result of sin.
 - d. Amos had tried to warn them (Amos 6:1-6).
 - e. In the New Testament: Heb. 5:12ff; Rev. 3:15-19).
2. Pride (5:5-7, 15).
 - a. “Times are good. We don’t need God. We are self-sufficient.”
 - b. People I have known that become sick or were in an accident, and suddenly lost all they had.
 3. Instability, spiritual weakness, fickleness (6:4; 13:3).
 - a. They were easily shaken from their faith.
 - b. As the Galatians of the New Testament: (Gal. 1:6-8), **“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain”** (4:11); **“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth”** (3:1).
 4. Worldliness (7:9-10).
 - a. Not sin itself, but the things that lead to sin, and that are associated with sin.
 - b. In the New Testament: Matt. 6:19-24, 33; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.
 5. Corruption (The word means “rotteness, decay”).
 - a. Politically, domestically, religiously, MORAL DECAY had set in.
 - b. Sought the aid of Egypt and Assyria (7:11).
 - c. Priests as well as people were corrupted (4:4, 6, 8-9).
 - d. Political and social and domestic

corruption are always traceable to RELIGIOUS corruption and departure (4:1-2, 6, 11-12).

6. Backsliding: **“My people are bent on backsliding from Me”** (11:7).

- a. When a people have turned from God, this is inevitable.
- b. It is a sad day when a man is not conscious of his distance from God.

7. Idolatry: **“Now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding”** (13:2).

- a. As modern man has erected idols of material possessions.
- b. Col. 3:5 **“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”**

D. Hosea draws a picture of the nature of sin.

1. He looked through the dictionary for the most accurate word to describe sin — UNFAITHFULNESS!
2. Sin is SPIRITUAL ADULTERY! HARLOTRY!
3. Sin’s effects are as certain and as natural as the power of gravity!
 - a. **“They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind”** (8:7).
 - b. Prov. 22:8) **“He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity.”**
 - c. Rom. 6:23 **“The wages of sin is death.”**
 - d. Gal. 6:7-9 **“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. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

II. Is There No Hope? Hosea Pictures The Way Back.

- A. He illustrates it with his own life.
 1. His wife left him to be a harlot — as Israel left God.
 2. But Hosea supports her, letting her think that her paramours are doing so (2:7-8).
 3. And Hosea allures her, and buys her back (2:14).
 4. God commands Hosea to forgive her and take her back (3:1).
 5. In 3:1-5, the comparison is made plain.
 6. Any departure from God is spiritual adultery.
 7. We think we are supporting ourselves, or that our profession supports us, our education enables us to make a living: But God IS SUPPORTING US ALL, ALL THE TIME, even while we play the spiritual harlot!!!
 8. As Hosea paid the price and got his wife back — because he loved his wife — God had paid the price to bring us back to Him.
- B. God exhorts Israel to “RETURN,” a word used 15 times in the book.
 1. The restored backslider will always testify that during his dark days of backsliding he went through suffering and sorrow; physical, mental and spiritual, especially spiritual.
 2. But when a backslider really returns from the wilderness — he is closer to God than ever!

*Author of the above outline is unknown to the writer of this commentary.

Prophets

I. Instructors Under The Old Covenant.

A. Moses the law giver.

1. As the law was given once, there is of necessity only one law giver — Moses.

a. Neh. 8:1, 14 **“All the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel....And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month.”**

b. Neh. 9:13-14 **“Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.”**

c. John 1:17 **“For the law was given by Moses.”**

B. The wise men.

1. The function of these men was to give counsel.

a. The most outstanding wise man

was Solomon.

b. We often refer to certain books of the Bible as being books of wisdom. These are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

C. The priests.

1. The special function of the priests was with regard to the law. Since the law was both civil and ecclesiastical, their function was twofold:

a. To declare and interpret, or teach the law.

b. To tend to the sacrificial duties.

2. Therefore, when the apostasy came, which we will study in Hosea, the priests were in a large measure responsible.

a. Lev. 10:8-11 **“The LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.”**

b. Hosea 4:6 **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy GOD, I will also forget thy children.”**

c. Mal. 2:7 **“The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and**

they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”

- D. The Psalmist (The poets).
1. These were the sweet singers in which is found expressions of the deepest emotions and feelings of the soul.
 2. Some of the poets reflect; others express; and still others foretell through their poetry.
- E. The prophets.
1. The mission of the prophet was to communicate GOD's divine will to the people.

II. The Meaning of the Word Prophet.

- A. According to the uniform teaching of the Bible, a prophet is a speaker of, or for GOD.
1. His words were not the production of his own spirit but they came from a higher source.
 2. **“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”** (2 Peter 1:20-21).
- B. *“To boil up like a fountain’ — both in the Old and New Testaments, a prophet is one who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, speaks the words and thoughts of God, whether they relate to the past, present, or future”* (Milligan, p. 298).
- C. Though the term prophet is the general term used in the Old Testament, other designations are also used to represent the same office.
1. Seer — This term seems to have been the earliest term used for the office of prophet (1 Sam. 9:9).
 2. The man of GOD (1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kings 17:18).

3. Servant of GOD (1 Chron. 6:49; 1 Kings 18:36).
4. Messenger of GOD (Isaiah 42:19).
5. Watchman (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7).

- D. In the simplest terminology — a prophet was a teacher of divine truth.

III. The False Prophet.

- A. Along with the true prophet, it is to be expected that there would arise false prophets (and they did).
1. Deut. 18:20-22
 2. Jer. 28
- B. These false prophets fall into two classes.
1. The mercenary false prophet.
 - a. Micah 3:5, 11
 - b. Propheying for material gain.
 2. The political false prophet.
 - a. Micah 3:5, 11
 - b. Prophesied for political favor.

IV. Prophets in Chronological Order (This will vary somewhat according to different commentators).

- A. The early Assyrian period (9th century).
1. Obadiah — about 845 B.C.
 2. Joel — about 845 B.C.
- B. The Assyrian period (8th century).
1. Jonah — about 790-750 B.C.
 2. Amos — about 755 B.C.
 3. Hosea — about 750-725 B.C.
 4. Isaiah — about 740-700 B.C.
 5. Micah — about 735-700 B.C.
- C. The Chaldean period (7th century).
1. Jeremiah — about 626-586 B.C.
 2. Zephaniah — about 630-625 B.C.
 3. Nahum — about 625-612 B.C.
 4. Habakkuk — about 605 B.C.
- D. Exile period (6th century).
1. Ezekiel — about 593-570 B.C.
 2. Daniel — about 605-536 B.C.
- E. Post Exilic period (about 6th and 5th

century).

1. Haggai — about 520 B.C.
2. Zechariah — about 520-518 B.C.
3. Malachi — about 440 B.C.

Hosea

I. The Man Himself.

- A. The name Hosea means “*salvation*” or “*deliverance.*” (The name Joshua means the same as Hosea, and the name “Jesus” also means “*Savior*” or “*salvation.*”).
- B. His home. It is generally believed that he was a native of the ten northern tribes, but this is uncertain.
- C. His occupation is not certainly known. Many have thought he could have been a priest because he has such a high conception of the duties of the priestly office.
- D. His characterization. Amos was considered to be a stern man, of clear thought and firm will; who stood to some degree apart from the common man. On the other hand, Hosea was a man with a deep emotional nature; rich in his affections; a man who entered sympathetically into the lives of others.

II. Date.

- A. From the time of Jeroboam 2nd — around 750-725 B.C. (This period is often called the “*Indian Summer*” of Israel.)

III. Background For This Book.

- A. The excesses of Israel by this time had become more marked than in the times of Amos. Hosea sums up the indictments against Israel in one word — “whoredom.” Israel had done worse than

adultery; she had prostituted herself before the baal’s of the land for hire (Hosea 2:12-13).

- B. Religiously, the people were without knowledge (Hosea 4:6; 5:4). Outwardly they paid homage to GOD, but in reality they honored the Baal’s which brought Hosea’s most severe rebukes upon them (Hosea 4:11-13; 8:4; 9:10).
- C. Morally, their conduct was the very opposite of what GOD required; swearing, breaking faith, murder, stealing, committing adultery, deceit, lying, drunkenness, dishonesty in business (Hosea 4:2, 11-12, 18; 6:8-9; 10:4; 13:1-2).
 1. Two-fold cause for wide spread immorality among Israel:
 - a. The detestable vileness and hypocrisy of the priests, with whom as usual, false prophets were in league.
 - b. The corruption of worship and religion. The calf worship introduced by Jeroboam 1, was now beginning to produce its natural fruits.
- D. Politically their faithlessness was also manifested in a two-fold manner:
 1. Rebellion against all legitimate authority and assassination of various kings and princes (Hosea 7:1-7; 8:4; 13:10-11).
 2. Dependence upon human defenses (8:14; 10:13; 14:3), and foreign alliances (5:13; 7:8), rather than on the power of the Lord.

IV. The Messages of Hosea.

- A. The righteousness of GOD; He is love. A favorite expression of Hosea is “loving kindness.”
- B. Doom — While it is a message of the righteousness of GOD; it also is a message of the doom of Israel.
- C. Amos laid special stress upon the social

injustices of his day; While Hosea makes the religious corruption of his time particularly prominent.

V. Teachings of Hosea.

- A. He showed one GOD's nature and character. The prophet considers a lack of knowledge of GOD on the part of the people, responsible for the corruptions found in Israel.
 - a. **Monotheism** — there is but one GOD and that GOD is Jehovah (Hosea 2:5ff; 8:4ff; 13:2).
 - b. **Omnipotence** — although the passages are not so numerous as in Amos, the prophet assumes all power belongs to GOD.
 - c. **Righteousness** — here Hosea parallels Amos, showing GOD will always punish sin, even in Israel. Righteousness alone can win GOD's favor (Hosea 9:9).
 - d. **Love** — GOD is love. This is perhaps the distinguishing element in Hosea's conception of GOD as compared to all the other prophets. Hosea is similar to John in the New Testament — "the apostle of love." (Hosea shows GOD's love for His people better than any other prophet, though they all show that love.)

Hosea

Chapter One

Hosea 1:1 “The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerli, 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.”

“The word of Jehovah that came unto Hosea the son of Beerli, 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.” (ASV)

Like all the prophets, Hosea set forth the fact that all he spoke came from GOD and not himself. This is consistent with Deuteronomy 18:20-22, which gives information regarding any prophet which GOD would raise up.

“The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to

pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:19-21).

From the list of kings given in this verse, Hosea is seen as prophesying over a fairly long period of time (Probably from the latter days of Uzziah into the early part of Hezekiah's reign). This period of time would probably be around sixty years (maybe between sixty and seventy years).

“Uzziah and Jeroboam reigned contemporaneously for twenty-six years. Somewhere during or rather before the end of that period Hosea commenced his ministry. Uzziah survived Jeroboam some twenty-six years, then Jotham and Ahaz in succession reigned each sixteen years. During all these fifty-eight years Hosea continued his ministerial labors. To these must be added a few years for the beginning of his prophetic career during the reign of Jeroboam, and some two or three years before its close in the reign of Hezekiah” (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 13, p. 1).

The Jeroboam mentioned in this text is Jeroboam II, the first of course being the original ruler of the ten tribes and the one

responsible for leading the people in the worship of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel.

It might be remembered that the name Hosea means “salvation” or “deliverance.” Hosea represents GOD and his love for His people.

Hosea 1:2 “The beginning of the Word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.”

“When Jehovah spake at the first by Hosea, Jehovah said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land doth commit great whoredom, departing from Jehovah.” (ASV)

First two words, WHOREDOMS — — *“It means whoredom, fornication, idolatry”* (Zodhiates, CD).

Third word WHOREDOMS — — *“To fornicate, commit fornication, be a harlot, play the harlot, commit adultery; to apostatize, have intercourse with false gods or foreigners; to seduce. The main idea is to commit illicit sexual intercourse, particularly with women. However, this strong image is used in a figurative sense to describe illegal contact between Israel and other nations and their gods”* (Zodhiates, CD).

Visible exhibitions were often employed by GOD through His prophets to give a particular message to His people. This can be seen in many examples, the following being a few examples found in the Scriptures. 1 Kings 11:29-31 (The torn garment); 1 Kings 20:35 (Wounding of the prophet); Jeremiah 13:1-7 (Wearing a girdle); Ezekiel 12:3-7 (moving of household goods); Revelation 10:8-11 (eating of a book). (See Zerr, Vol. 4, p. 276.)

“The beginning of the Word of the Lord by Hosea.” This speaks of the time

when GOD began to speak to His people by or through Hosea. These words were probably not written as a diary, but toward the end of Hosea’s life.

The Lord told His prophet (Hosea) to **“take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms.”** The questions need to be asked: (1) Had she already been a harlot at the time Hosea took her to wife? (2) Did she become a harlot only after they were married for a time? There are arguments made by those who take either one of the two positions mentioned, but this writer believes it was after they became husband and wife. The consideration which leads him to take this position is the whole theme of the book. The parallel is that Hosea represents GOD, and Gomer represents Israel. When GOD first took Israel to Himself, she was not playing the harlot; she was striving to obeying Him. It was later, after He took her from her bondage (type of sin), that she became unfaithful to Him. The children would join their mother in unfaithfulness — their idolatry. It should be remembered in studying this book that GOD often uses the picture of a marriage to represent Himself and His people — He is the husband, and His people are His bride.

The Bible often uses the term **“harlotry”** to signify a form of idolatry or unfaithfulness and not just prostitution. One aspect of fornication is adultery in the physical sense, and that often played a significant role in the worship of false gods (idols). The Jews had become extremely guilty of spiritual adultery by this time in their history. As a nation they were espoused to GOD; they were to be faithful to Him and Him alone. When they turned to idols, they were being as unfaithful to Him as a physical woman who was unfaithful to her husband.

“The land hath committed great whoredom.” The word **“land”** does not

speak about the earth. Rather, it speaks of the people of the land of Israel, and they are said to have committed “**great whoredom.**” Any time GOD’s people are unfaithful to Him, it should be considered a tremendous sin.

If Gomer was a harlot at the time of her marriage to Hosea, then Hosea might be likened to the Savior, who took to Himself a people who were unclean in order to make them pure through the process of marriage to Himself.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

If a Christian departs from GOD, he serves the creature, and such is spiritual adultery.

“Lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee” (Psalm 73:27).

There is nothing worse for a man to do than for him to become unfaithful to GOD.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD” (James 4:4).

Hosea 1:3 **“So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.”**

“So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son.” (ASV)

“So he went and took Gomer.” Hosea had been told to take a wife (v. 2), and he

did what GOD told him to do. In his action, Hosea reminds this writer of Abraham. Abraham was told to do something which was distasteful, i.e., offer his son as a sacrifice (Genesis 22). Abraham did not argue with GOD but set out to do what GOD told him to do, even though he did not understand how GOD’s previous promises would be fulfilled when he obeyed Him. The record shows that Hosea did not hesitate in taking a wife who would become unfaithful to him. Hosea’s attitude seems to be, *“Whatever GOD tells me to do is right for me, so I will do whatever He commands me to do.”* His attitude is a tremendous lesson for everyone to learn. Christians must learn to trust GOD enough to do whatever the Bible tells them to do, knowing that GOD always requires what is best for them.

Two names are given here: Gomer (Hosea’s bride) and Diblaim (Hosea’s father-in-law). The name Gomer is thought to mean *“Perfection”* (Keil-Delitzsch, p. 38); *“Corruption”* (Henry, p. 1105); *“Completion”* (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 13, p. 3). The name Diblaim is thought to mean *“Fig-cakes”* (Keil-Delitzsch, p. 38); *“Two cakes, or lumps of figs”* (Henry, p. 1105).

“Gomer means ‘completion,’ that is, the filling up of the measure of idolatry, or ripeness of consummate wickedness. Her name was indicative of the wholesale adultery and idolatry of the kingdom she represented. As a ‘wife of whoredom,’ this woman of the Northern Kingdom, regarded as an idolatress, became a symbol of her people. Gomer was the daughter of Diblaim, whose name signifies ‘double layers of grapecake,’ speaks of one completely given up to sensuality” (Lockyer, p. 60).

Hosea 1:4 **“And the LORD said unto him,**

Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.”

“And Jehovah said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.” (ASV)

GOD takes a pro-active role in these events, even to the naming of Hosea’s children. The name of Hosea’s firstborn is to be Jezreel. Various writers give the following meanings of this name: “*God sows*” (Keil-Delitzsch, p. 39); “*God will disperse*” (Clarke, Vol. 4, p. 624); “*Scattered of God*” (Henry, p. 1106). This name probably has at least some significance based upon the way seed was planted in that time. As the laborer (sower) walked along, he would take a handful of seed and fling it over the ground. The children of Israel would literally be scattered among the nations after their destruction by Assyria under king Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17:5-6).

GOD is going to avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu. What blood? As one looks back at Second Kings chapter ten, he finds the slaughter of the sons of Ahab, their heads being sent to Jezreel by the command of Jehu. Furthermore, verse ten states that it was GOD’s will for Jehu to destroy the family of Ahab, as spoken by the prophet Elijah. After killing all of Ahab’s immediate family, Jehu next killed all of Ahab’s great men, kinsfolk, and priests. The question arises: If GOD desired the destruction of Ahab’s house by the hand of Jehu (2 Kings 9:4-8) — then why was GOD now going to take vengeance on the blood of Jehu, i.e., the blood shed by Jehu?

Jehu did the will of GOD in destroying this apostate family, but he did not do it out of his love for GOD and because it was the

right thing to do. He did it because he was motivated by selfishness and greed for power. He had no true concern for GOD’s will, only his own. When men do what GOD tells them to do — but only because they were told to do it — GOD is not pleased! Such a person will eventually do what he wants to do if he does not personally agree with GOD’s command. Jehu’s attitude can be seen in Second Kings 10:31:

“Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD GOD of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.”

There is a strong lesson to be learned by GOD’s people of all times from this. **Doing what GOD says is not enough — obedience must come from a heart filled with love for GOD and His will!**

One can perform all the acts of worship which GOD commands, but if he lives by his own standards, then what good does it do him? If GOD is not worshipped from true motives of love for Him, then that person’s worship is worthless and condemned by GOD! Listen to Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:21-23.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

The final thought with regard to this verse is that GOD was not only going to destroy a family because of its sins — He was going to destroy a nation. The nation

of Israel had abandoned GOD for the idols; now He would abandon them.

Hosea 1:5 “And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.”

“And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.” (ASV)

The breaking of the bow is significant, because a broken bow cannot be depended upon for defense. The bow of Israel, its mighty men, its military, would be broken; its strength would be destroyed. The text here does not name the nation which would destroy the might of Israel, but Second Kings 15:29 and 17:3-5 state that it was Assyria whom GOD used to accomplish this. From those two texts, it appears that this was accomplished in two stages. Tiglath-pileser III conquered many cities in Israel and took many captives back to Assyria. The second and final act of destruction seems to have come under the rule of Shalmaneser. Cook believes that the military might of Israel was broken by Tiglath-pileser III in 734-722 B.C. at the Valley of Jezreel (Cook, p. 1381). Shalmaneser later destroyed the nation once and for all time.

“The Jezreel plain in particular was probably conquered in 733 B.C. by Tiglath-pileser 3rd” (Cook, p. 1381).

Jezreel is located on a plain which is known as “the great plain of Esdraelon.” It is in this great plain where many battles have been fought in ancient times. It was here that victory was given over Sisera (Judges 4:4ff), and the life and potential dynasty of Saul came to an end (1 Samuel 29:1ff). It was here that the northern tribes were to be broken and destroyed as a nation.

“The valley of Jezreel is a beautiful and a broad valley or plain, stretching, from W. to E., from Mount

Carmel and the sea to the Jordan, which it reaches through two arms, between the Mountains of Gilboa, little Hermon, and Tabor; and from S. to N. from the Mountains of Ephraim to those of Galilee” (Barnes, p. 22).

Hosea 1:6 “And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And GOD said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.”

“And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And Jehovah said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah; for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, that I should in any wise pardon them.” (ASV)

A second child is born into this family, and GOD again gives the child its name — a name of significance. It is wise to remember that when GOD gave a person a name or re-named him, its meaning was very important. The name given to this little girl is “**Lo-ruhamah**,” which means “*no pity; no mercy; that hath not obtained mercy.*” Israel did not heed the warnings which it was given and the years of mercy which GOD had extended to her. Now she has stepped beyond a boundary which He set, and would no longer be shown any mercy. When one lives in disobedience to GOD’s laws, refusing to accept His counsel that man has no right to expect mercy.

Israel will be scattered among the nations, never to return as a nation. Judah will eventually be taken into captivity, but mercy will be shown to them as they later return as a national entity to their homeland.

Again the terrible decree is given, “**I will utterly take them away.**” GOD is stating very clearly that He will destroy them for their unfaithfulness.

Scholars debate whether Lo-ruhamah was Hosea’s child or not. The only thing

we can say about this is “momma’s baby, daddy’s maybe.”

Hosea 1:7 “But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their GOD, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.”

“But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their GOD, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.” (ASV)

The house of Israel was to be brought to an end, but Judah would receive mercy. Mercy was to be extended to Judah because she was still attempting to remain faithful to GOD, yet, she too would eventually fall into the wretchedness of idolatry and be punished accordingly. Hosea’s words here are not simply a condemnation of Israel but also serve as a warning to Judah not to follow in her sister’s footsteps.

Through Hosea, GOD states that Judah will be spared for a time, but it will not be through her own power or abilities. GOD would deliver her through His power. This came to pass when Sennacherib had surrounded the city of Jerusalem and would have destroyed it (Isaiah 37). But GOD intervened in the course of the night with an angel who destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib’s soldiers (2 Kings 19:35). Sennacherib returned to Assyria only to be murdered by his own sons.

“Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son

reigned in his stead” (Isaiah 37:37-38).

Not only did GOD deliver Judah at that time (not by her own power), but He also did the same thing later when He delivered her from Babylonian captivity. This release from captivity did not come because Judah rebelled against Babylon, but through GOD’s willing the people to be released and raising up a king who would let them go home with a charge to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. It should also be pointed out according to historical records that Cyrus did the same thing for all the captured people under his control — not just the Jews.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the Word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD GOD of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his GOD be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD GOD of Israel, (he is the GOD,) which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:1-3).

Salvation would come to Judah, but not by its own military power.

In the Christian dispensation, man is delivered from sin, not by his own strength, but by the Gospel which works like yeast on his heart. Man does not deliver himself; the Creator delivers him through His mercy and grace.

Judah will be delivered from Assyria

because at this time she “*retained the true place of worship, the lawful priesthood and the God-ordained lineage of the monarchy*” (Butler, p. 438). Judah’s king at the time of deliverance from Sennecharib was Hezekiah — the great reformer.

It is interesting to note that the prophets often warned Judah not to follow in the steps of Israel. Judah could have observed the destruction of Israel and avoided the disastrous effects of her unfaithfulness, but eventually she followed after Israel anyway. Those who do not learn from the past or the mistakes of others are doomed to repeat them. Consider how sad it is that man can look around him even today and see the terrible consequences of living a life of sin and yet remain involved in sin to his own eventual destruction — just as Judah did.

Hosea 1:8 “Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.”

“Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.” (ASV)

Eastern women commonly nurse their children for years, sometimes even to the point that the child could stand and nurse. The point being made is that some undetermined time went by from the last warning (Lo-ruhamah) until the final warning and declaration was given (Lo-ammi).

Hosea 1:9 “Then said GOD, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not My people, and I will not be your GOD.”

“And Jehovah said, Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not My people, and I will not be your GOD.” (ASV)

A second son is now born, whom GOD names Lo-ammi, or “*Not My people.*” The former people of GOD will be disowned because **THEY** rejected GOD. The ten tribes of Israel were no longer going to be classified as GOD’s chosen people, but

were to be scattered among the nations, without mercy, until they were no longer a distinct people or nation. Thus, they are often referred to as the “ten lost tribes” because they never again resurfaced as a nation.

“This was fulfilled in Israel when they were utterly taken away into the land of Assyria. They were no longer God’s people; no prophets were sent to them, no promises made to them, as were to the two tribes in their captivity” (Henry, p. 1106).

This was a prediction of the final chastisement. They had repeatedly rejected GOD; now He would reject them. It should be emphasized that these ten tribes had formerly been part of those to whom GOD had said, “**I will walk among you, and will be your GOD, and ye shall be My people**” (Leviticus 26:12). Now, because of their continual disobedience, they have reached a point where GOD disowns them. They are no longer His people! The warning should be clear to all. Today, when people become Christians and then turn away from GOD, refusing to return to faithfulness to Him, GOD will do the same thing to them that He did to the ten tribes.

One of the interesting things to consider about this context is that Hosea knew that Jezreel was his son. He may have had doubts that Lo-ruhamah was his child by the name GOD gave her. It seems that he knew Lo-ammi was not his son, again by the name GOD gave him. Yet, if he did have doubts, he continued to do all he could to sustain this marriage. It would seem to this writer that this parallels to some extent GOD’s relationship with His people today or in any age. He does all that He can to sustain a “Husband/wife” relationship with His people, but if His wife refuses to accept Him as her husband, He will finally divorce her.

“It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy GOD, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee” (Deuteronomy 28:15). The reader is encouraged to read the rest of that chapter.

Hosea 1:10 **“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living GOD.”**

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living GOD.” (ASV)

The prophecies in this verse were yet future. GOD had not completely disowned the ten tribes at this time. But the time was coming when they would be scattered among the nations by the Assyrians. Until that time came, GOD continued to send them prophets as witnessed by Hosea. These prophets tried to persuade the people of Israel to change their course, to move away from destruction. They ceased to be GOD’s people when they would no longer share in worship to Him (sacrifices, Temple, etc.).

But notice the hope GOD gave when He said, **“There it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living GOD.”** Having been separated by GOD, because of their unfaithfulness, they became no different to GOD than the Gentiles. They were both cut off from His chosen people and the inherent

blessings which were available through the remnant. But this could change on an individual basis through the fulfillment of the promise made in this verse. When was this promise to be fulfilled? With the coming of the Gospel dispensation. At that time GOD would make it possible for all nations to flow unto Himself.

Notice the reference to this in First Peter, where Peter spoke to the exiles of the dispersion regarding the Gentiles.

“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of GOD: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 1:10).

Paul also referenced this passage and quoted from it regarding the Gentiles who would become sons of GOD along with any Jews. This was indeed the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18).

“Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He saith also in Osee, I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the living GOD” (Romans 9:24-26).

From this passage there can be absolutely no doubt that the promise made is fulfilled in the Gentiles and Jews being combined into one family — the sons of GOD. Notice also the following passage in Ephesians.

“He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in

Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto GOD in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Verse ten does not deal with fleshly Israel but with all who are willing to come to GOD through Christ. The words of this verse clearly show that the promise made to faithful Abraham was never invalidated. Those who exhibit the same faith he exhibited are those who will be unnumberable, who will be the sons of GOD.

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that GOD would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham....That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:7-9, 14).

Hosea 1:11 “Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.”

“And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” (ASV)

There is the possibility of a double meaning in this verse. The first is that these two nations were brought together through

the return of the people from Babylonian captivity. Assyria had taken the northern kingdom into captivity and scattered them throughout the nations it had captured. Later when Babylon captured Assyria, these nations came under Babylonian rule. When Cyrus allowed the Jews (no longer Israel and Judah) to return, the two were reunited under one authority. Howbeit, few of the ten northern tribes returned.

The second meaning, which fits better with all Messianic prophecy, was fulfilled many years later — the Christian dispensation. In that nation all men, regardless of nationality, would reside under an eternal head in the church.

The problem some have with this passage is found in the phrase **“And appoint themselves one head.”** But this renders no difficulty when it is realized that the act of appointing also implies consent. GOD calls through His divine will, and one agrees, accepts, appoints himself to have one head by obeying the Gospel of Christ. Hence, when all distinctions of class or nationality were broken down by the atonement of Christ on the tree of Calvary, all those who would follow His laws, appointed Christ, on an individual basis, as their head.

“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:22).

The name “Jezreel” means both “scatter” and “sow.” Therefore, when GOD threatened the Israelites, this name took on the significance of scattering the people among the nations. But now it is used in the opposite way to show a promise which is directly related to the Christian era. Here all nations are to be blessed under one head; GOD will sow. GOD indeed has sown a great nation through His Son and the Words He brought mankind from His Father — the Bible.

“The seed is the Word of GOD”
(Luke 8:11).

As one writer states it:

“Even unto the end, every time of any special growth of the church, every conversion of heathen tribe or people, is a day of Jezreel, a day in which ‘the Lord soweth’” (Barnes, p. 27).

Hosea Chapter Two

Hosea 2:1 “Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.”

“Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.” (ASV)

This passage is a good example of the way man has split chapters and verses artificially. This verse is obviously a continuation of the thoughts of the previous verses (1:10-11). This verse is a part of the promise found in the last few verses. This promise would not be fulfilled until the Gospel dispensation. GOD’s people would then be called **“Ammi”** and **“Ruhamah.”**

Notice the change in these words by the dropping of the prefix **“Lo.”** Without this prefix, **“Ammi”** means *“My people,”* and **“Ruhamah”** means *“have obtained mercy.”* GOD is holding out a promise of mercy for all who return to following Him.

This is a call for them to repent and return to Him. GOD expects His servants to try to get His backsliding children back into a covenant relationship with Him. Opportunity must be extended with loving care to those who have left GOD.

Hosea 2:2 “Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;”

“Contend with your mother, contend; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; and let her put away her whoredoms from her face, and her adulteries from between her breasts;” (ASV)

We should remember the types which are drawn in this text.

Hosea	GOD	Christ
Gomer	Israel	Church
Children	Individual citizens of Israel/Church	

Next it should be understood that this verse begins another series of threats and admonitions against the unfaithful wife and nation.

PLEAD — rib — *“To toss; to grapple, wrangle, strive; to contend, quarrel, hold a controversy, plead, conduct a legal case,*

make a charge, defend, be an adversary; to complain, to debate, contend forensically, plead a cause or case; a pleader, a defender; an adversary” (Zodhiates, CD).

“Plead with your mother, plead.” As seen above, the idea is to beg, plead, make a legal case against. Plead with the nation. GOD urges those who still had the ability, because of their integrity and faithfulness to GOD, to plead with their mother (nation) to turn from her unfaithfulness and once again enjoy the exclusive fellowship of her husband.

“The nation or kingdom, regarded as an ideal unity, is called the mother; whereas the several members of the nation are the children of this mother” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 51).

As long as she continues in her unfaithfulness, she cannot be considered a faithful wife, nor can Hosea be considered her husband. This speaks very pointedly to a time to come, if the nation did not become faithful once again. Generally speaking, the nation as a whole was given to idolatry, but some individuals were not, and they were to plead with the rest for repentance. Looking back in history, it is revealed that the nation did not change, and GOD did in fact remove Israel from being His chosen people.

“Let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight.” In all of this, GOD’s mercy and forgiving spirit are clearly seen. GOD begged and pleaded with His people to become faithful once again, just as a husband would beg his wife to give up unfaithfulness to him. There is a great lesson here for anyone who finds himself in this situation. Every effort should be made for reconciliation so that the marriage can be salvaged. What is the idolatrous wife/nation to do? Put away her idolatrous actions — get them out of sight and mind. It is like the drunk who must not go near alcoholic beverages.

The idea of adulteries and whoredoms in

this passage is the holding of sinful loves, rather than clinging to a faithful husband (GOD). The idea is that the unfaithful one should put away her unlawful lovers to the extent she would no longer gaze upon her former objects of unfaithfulness with any desire for them.

The picture here is very graphic of the woman who advertises herself as a prostitute. She makes herself as attractive as she can, yet with no doubt as to her intentions.

Hosea 2:3 “Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.”

“lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.” (ASV)

GOD is saying that if Israel did not turn from her idolatries and whoredoms, He would take away all of the blessings He had formerly bestowed upon her. The term **“naked”** describes a condition absent of all external blessings, visible gifts, the goods of this world. GOD had developed a nation in Egypt which went from having nothing to having great material wealth. He had made her to be a mighty nation which ruled over all of Palestine, covered in glory. But she refused to be faithful to Him, and now he threatened to take away every blessing He had formerly and graciously given her. When GOD did this, Israel would become desolate. The soul of an unrepentant sinner can be compared to the picture painted here, i.e., barren, desolate, and non-fruit-bearing. Why? Because it is void of GOD’s presence.

The description seen in this passage was a common way of punishing an adulteress in ancient lands. Among Germans, an adulteress was treated in the

following manner.

“They shaved off her hair, stripped her naked in the presence of her relatives, and in this state drove her from the house of her husband” (Clarke, Vol. 4, p. 626).

“I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare” (Ezekiel 16:38-39).

Often the adulteress would be executed.

Hosea 2:4 “And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms.”

“Yea, upon her children will I have no mercy; for they are children of whoredom;” (ASV)

Why would GOD not grant mercy unto the children? They could not help the fact their mother was an adulteress. This passage shows that the children acted just like their mother; they gave themselves over to unfaithfulness (idolatry) to GOD. They did not follow their father’s lead.

Consider that one of her children was possibly innocent of these crimes. Verse two urges a child(ren) to plead with its mother to give up her harlotry, possibly indicating at least one of them was not guilty of following her lead. Yet there are often consequences for the innocent because of the sins of others — the whole nation will be taken into captivity. It might also be considered that the children may at first abhor their mothers immorality, but with time may be wholly given in to it themselves.

The Bible clearly teaches that children are not held accountable for their parents sins or vice-versa.

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin” (Deuteronomy 24:16).

It should further be considered that, in the present text, the children (individuals) and mother (nation) represent the same thing, though some individuals were not guilty of the nation’s crimes against GOD.

“In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge” (Jeremiah 31:29-30).

“What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?...Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die....The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:2, 4, 20).

A study of the Bible clearly shows that they received no mercy, not because of their mother’s sin, but because they were committing the same sins. This should be

a warning to parents to be careful with their lives, because their children most probably will follow their example. It should also be a warning regarding who one marries. While one of the mates may be able to maintain godliness, the other may not, and whose lead will the children follow? Commit the same sins as parents and reap the same consequences.

Hosea 2:5 “For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.”

“for their mother hath played the harlot; she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.” (ASV)

A harlot leaves the natural affections and loyalties that a woman normally has for her husband and turns to bid those that she does not love, or know, to come to her. It is disgraceful for a woman to act in this way (A man, too, for that matter.). Note that she was not seduced or deceived; she sought these illegal lovers of her own volition. Not only was Gomer behaving in this despicable way but Israel, whom she represented, was behaving like a harlot as well by running after false gods.

“She waits not, as it were, to be enticed, allured, seduced. She herself, uninvited, unbidden, unsought, contrary to the wont and natural feeling of woman, follows after those by whom she is not drawn, and refuses to follow God Who would draw her” (Barnes, p. 30).

Gomer and Israel were shamefully chasing after strange lovers for their physical needs (bread, water, wool, flax) and their luxuries (oil, drink). The heathen people attributed all their wealth and gain to their false gods.

Israel, as she ran after the idols, was falsely attributing the things GOD had supplied her to these idols as well. It may be that the **“lovers”** here represent Assyria and Egypt, and their gods, whom Israel sought at various times as allies. This writer believes that the lovers were the gods Israel served.

The **“lovers”** in this passage, represents whatever a man loves or seeks instead of GOD. Whatever thing a man places above GOD is his god. Man needs to learn to **“seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”** (Matthew 6:33). GOD says, **“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”** (Colossians 3:2).

A woman (man) who sells her (his) body gains material things and loses spirituality; so also with Israel, who wanted material wealth and the approval (alliances) of other nations. Israel thought she received material things for her affections, just as a prostitute would, and thus alienated herself from GOD, the One who truly provided for her needs. Judah would later attribute her wealth and riches to idols as well (Jeremiah 44:15-18).

Has America of today learned anything from ancient Israel and Judah? Apparently not!

“Our great plenty and abundance, our prosperity and eminence as a nation, do we thank God for them? or do we attribute all of these things to ‘our technology, our system of government, our free enterprise system, or our science, education, or political institutions?’” (Coffman, p. 38).

“What a warning we have here for once God-fearing but increasingly pagan Americans” (Caldwell, p. 94)!

Hosea 2:6 “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.”

“Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, that she shall not find her paths.” (ASV)

Because Israel sold herself for material prosperity, just as a harlot would, GOD hedged her path with thorns and a wall. In doing this, not only could she not go to her lovers, but all ways of escape were shut off as well.

It is not impossible to get through a hedge of thorns, but the one who attempts such will suffer many wounds in trying to get beyond it. A wall would be even more difficult, even for a strong man, to go through. Walled cities in those times were not conquered by breaking the walls down but through siege — starve them out. The whole idea seems to be that GOD would cause Israel to suffer greatly when she tried to follow her “**lovers,**” and after a time it would become impossible for her to follow them. She would be stricken to the point of not being able to offer sacrifices to those idols, or court favor with the foreign powers with gifts of friendship. One who is contained in such enclosures cannot escape to indulge in pleasures or from the hand of punishment.

Hosea 2:7 “And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.”

“And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.” (ASV)

*“The words rendered **follow after** and **seek**, are intensive, and express ‘eager,*

vehement pursuit,’ and ‘diligent search’” (Barnes, p. 31). It did not matter how hard she tried to find these lovers (idolatrous gods), she could not find them, because they did not really exist. When the people begged these gods for help and blessings none were to be found because they did not exist.

As Gomer came to her senses, she stated, “**I will go and return to my first husband.**” GOD is the only true husband one may have in religion. Unfortunately, man can and often does leave GOD like an unfaithful person leaves his mate. That person then travels a path which can only lead to poverty and destruction. Sometimes when the sinner reaches the deep recesses of poverty, he realized that he would be better off if he returned to his first husband — GOD. Upon a penitent return to GOD, His blessings will be renewed. He will accept one back into His fold if that one will repent.

Does this remind the reader of something he read in the New Testament? What about the prodigal son of Luke chapter fifteen? He went away with the riches his father had given him, squandering them on perceived pleasures, and lost all he had been given. In his deep poverty he came back to a proper way of thinking, realizing he had been so much better off in the house of his Father than in the land of sin (cf. Hebrews 11:24-28). Making the journey back to his Father’s house, he was surprised to be welcomed back, not as a servant, but as a lost son who was recovered.

So it is in general with man; he is rich spiritually, then he reaches an age of accountability and begins squandering his rich spiritual gifts until he becomes bankrupt. But it should always be remembered that the door is ever open for his return to GOD. Just like the prodigal son, “**If we confess our sins, He is**

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Unfortunately, so many have to learn these lessons the hard way.

“What Hosea was faced with was not two distinct religions, co-existing in the same land, each with its own festivals and holy days, but a single religion which had incorporated practices both from Israel’s old national religion and from the Baalism of the canaanites” (Coffman, p. 44).

“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your GOD: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil” (Joel 2:12-13).

Hosea 2:8 **“For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.”**

“For she did not know that I gave her the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.” (ASV)

Israel had refused to recognize GOD as her true benefactor, just as Gomer had done with Hosea. She forgot that GOD was the one who bestows all rich gifts.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

GOD had given the Israelites the land they possessed, increased their crops, and made

them a great and rich nation. Instead of using the wealth He gave them to praise Him, they used it to glorify false gods. They refused to recognize that these gifts came from GOD, because they did not want to recognize this fact. It is the same thing found in Romans 1:21, 28.

“Because that, when they knew GOD, they glorified Him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened....And even as they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge, GOD gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

When man will not recognize GOD and the blessings He gives, it is because he does not want to recognize GOD. It is not because of a lack of knowledge that man disbelieves, it is because of his own stubborn rebellion to an absolute authority for his life. Man disbelieves because he refuses to accept the evidence GOD has given him.

Hosea 2:9 **“Therefore will I return, and take away My corn in the time thereof, and My wine in the season thereof, and will recover My wool and My flax given to cover her nakedness.”**

“Therefore will I take back My grain in the time thereof, and My new wine in the season thereof, and will pluck away My wool and My flax which should have covered her nakedness.” (ASV)

Just as a patient husband will eventually lose his patience with an unfaithful wife, so also would GOD finally disown unfaithful Israel. A husband will finally remove all the blessings he formerly bestowed upon his wife. Such a husband would stop bestowing the necessities of life upon an unfaithful wife, because she no longer deserves them. GOD is declaring

He will do the same thing to Israel.

GOD had blessed Israel with corn, wine, oil, silver and gold; but the people had attributed these gifts to Baal and used them to serve Baal. Now GOD declared He would take these things back. The land would no longer prosper.

As Barnes rightly states the case, “*God taketh away all, that they who knew not the Giver through abundance, might know Him through want*” (p. 33).

Notice when these things would be taken away — at the harvest time. This implies that everything appeared to be going along just fine with the promise of a good crop. Therefore they would not be prepared for a sudden disaster which would take away those crops. GOD had richly blessed them in the past, but since they had misused these things, He would take them away — not just take them away, but in such a way that would devastate them and shame them.

From this one must learn that he should not and cannot use what GOD has given him in other ways, except to glorify Him. If such is done, he must recognize that GOD will not be pleased with him and may take everything away from him in this life, but such loss would not even come close to losing everything for eternity. GOD blesses His people for two basic purposes: (1) so they may glorify Him, and (2) so they may be a blessing to others.

The loss of crops would put them into poverty. The loss of flax and wool would leave them naked — all their lewdness would be exposed.

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28).

Hosea 2:10 “And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and

none shall deliver her out of Mine hand.”

“And now will I uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of My hand.” (ASV)

DISCOVER — galah — “*A verb meaning to reveal, to be revealed, to uncover, to remove, to go into exile, to reveal oneself, to expose, to disclose*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 202); “*Be or become clear, uncovered; display, reveal, declare; go forth, emigrate*” (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 162); “*To make naked, to uncover. To take away a covering*” (Wilson, p. 126).

DELIVER — nasal — “*A verb meaning to deliver. Deliverance often indicated the power of one entity overcoming the power of another*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 749); “*Deliver oneself, be delivered; snatch away, deliver*” (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 664); “*To pluck out of the hands of an oppressor or enemy; to preserve, recover, rescue; to deliver from danger, evil, trouble; to be delivered, to escape; implying, in most cases, exertion, tumult, bursting of bonds, etc., with power and courage*” (Wilson, p. 115).

The word “**lewdness**” originally meant “*folly*” and then “*foulness.*” All sin is folly and is a stench in the nostrils of GOD. Being stripped of all her wealth, Gomer/Israel would be shown for what she really was. Her foulness would be revealed to her lovers. Remember that her lovers were the idols and foreign allies with which she played the harlot.

Notice in the preceding passages that GOD said He was going to take away the wealth He had previously bestowed on Israel and thus reveal her lewdness. Man often seems to feel that there is an association between wealth and closeness to GOD. Man sees outward, physical blessings as showing a man to be righteous. But let GOD take away these

physical blessings, and people will then think he is a great sinner. Prosperity or the lack thereof does not determine a man's spirituality. Often, stripping a person of his wealth reveals his true character, whether it be good or evil.

To confirm the above thoughts, study the book of Job. When his wealth was taken away, his "friends" thought he must have committed some great sin for all these calamities to come upon him. Job's righteous character showed through in spite of his great losses. Notice the events of John chapter nine, and one sees this same attitude expressed. The disciples thought this man suffered blindness because of some sin which had been committed.

None of Gomer's/Israel's lovers were going to be able to prevent her from being exposed. Just as in the relationship of a husband and wife, no matter how much the lover would like to protect his partner in sin, it will still be revealed. There will come a point in time when the innocent party can no longer be longsuffering, and nothing will then stop the exposure of such a sin.

Think of the shame of an unfaithful wife stripped of her clothing in a public place, with no way to hide her nakedness. Only the most calloused of women would not feel shame in such a situation. And yet, many today seem to be this calloused, parading themselves around in all sorts of undress. And look at how many parents endorse the public nakedness of their sons and daughters.

The gods Israel had turned to were not real; they could not help her. Neither would the alliances she had made with other nations save her from humiliation. GOD would give her up; she would be taken into captivity.

"Israel would none of Me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that My

people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (Psalm 91:11-16).

Hosea 2:11 **"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts."**

"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies." (ASV)

Mirth represents happiness and joy. There was much joy surrounding the feast days of the Jews, but it had now turned into false joy. They should have been able to celebrate these feasts with joy all of their days, but such would now cease. In captivity they would no longer be able to have them (the three major feasts are probably under consideration — Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles). Then lesser feasts are mentioned to complete the picture of all joyful occasions ceasing. The joy of yearly, monthly, weekly feasts — all joy and celebration will end.

Interestingly, while the Israelites were worshipping false gods, idols, et cetera, they apparently still kept the feast days, new moons, and sabbaths. What Israel had done was to take parts of all these religions — true and false — and combine them into one false religion. Doing what GOD has commanded as worship in the wrong environment and wrong way becomes false religion. While engaged in

these services, they were actually condemning themselves. They recognized the validity of worshipping GOD; at the same time they were saying that service and worship to GOD was not enough — they wanted these false gods in addition to GOD. There is a pattern here, for those who have once worshipped the true GOD have trouble divorcing themselves from Him. They want to try to please Him while leaving Him. This was also the case in Ahab's day.

“How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be GOD, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow Him. And the people answered him not a word” (1 Kings 18:21).

They wanted to serve their own gods and the GOD of Heaven at the same time. They failed to realize that one cannot please both.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24).

In every age, when people disobey GOD, they try not to depart completely from Him. They will try to serve Him just enough to soothe their consciences — but such is a false soothing which leads to eternal destruction. They try to rationalize their actions, saying they are doing this or that for GOD, so they must be all right. The truth is that they do these things to please themselves — NOT GOD! Pleasing GOD is the only thing which really matters.

“He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us” (1 John 3:24).

“This is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

Hosea 2:12 “And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.”

“And I will lay waste her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she hath said, These are my hire that my lovers have given me; and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.” (ASV)

GOD said He would take away the vines and fig trees which Israel had attributed as being from the idols she served. Notice that the warnings of punishment are getting stronger. Before verse nine, the fruits of the crops were to be taken away, but now the very vines and trees are to be taken away. This happened through lack of care. The grape arbor left without care soon becomes useless to man, producing fruit fit only for the animals. Israel's destruction was to be so complete that even her enemies would not care for the vineyards. How was it the vines and fig trees would be destroyed? GOD did this through the conquering practices of the Assyrians. Their practice was, when they conquered a nation, to deport its citizens, scattering them throughout their empire. Once they had moved the people from the land, there would be no one left to cultivate the vines and fig trees, to protect and care for them. The vine and figs would become worthless, and what fruit they might have would be consumed by the beasts who could now roam wherever they wished.

“Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their

welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents” (Psalm 69:22-25).

These verses (Psalm 69) were part of a prophecy about those who would reject the Christ; yet, they show one the very thing which happened to Israel.

Hosea 2:13 “And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat Me, saith the LORD.”

“And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim, unto which she burned incense, when she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and went after her lovers, and forgat Me, saith Jehovah.” (ASV)

The word “**Baalim**” is the plural of “Baal” and refers to a plurality of the male gods they were serving. The “**days of Baalim**” would then refer to days which were dedicated to their service and worship. When man leaves GOD, he usually is not happy with one god, but takes a plurality of them.

“There are many Baal’s; Baal-berith, Lord of covenants or oaths; Baal-zebub, Lord of flies; Baal-Peor, Lord of sin” (Butler, p. 452).

The offering of incense, was a normal practice of worship, and is a type of prayers. Incense is probably used here to signify the whole of worship by using a part for the whole, i.e., signifying all of the acts of worship in which they engaged. This signifies that Israel had been giving her thanks and praise to these gods. She “decked herself” is a reference to her taking

the things GOD had given her and using them to chase her lovers (idols and nations around her).

Coffman says, *“There is a picture in this verse of what went on in the worship of Baal. Sensuous women ornament themselves with jewels and offered themselves to all who desired them, a couple of raisin cakes being the customary price”* (p. 45)!

Israel’s twofold wickedness is clearly declared: (1) her worship of the Baalim, and (2) her forgetting her GOD.

“Such is the character of an all engrossing passion, such is the course of sin...The soul, at last, does not rebel against GOD; it forgets Him” (Barnes, p. 35).

“Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deuteronomy 6:12).

The same complaint was later made against Judah in Jeremiah 23:26-27.

“How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten My name for Baal.”

Hosea 2:14 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.”

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.” (ASV)

Now one sees the unexpected. The nation had turned away from GOD, yet He said He was going to allure her back to Himself. In the midst of threats come words of comfort. This is the beginning of a prophecy regarding the end of their captivity and the beginning of the Christian dispensation. This passage shows the extreme mercy of GOD toward mankind. Seldom would a man have such mercy toward an unfaithful wife.

The original word for “**allure**” means to “*entice*,” so one sees GOD saying He was going to entice His former wife (people) back to Himself. Satan entices man to leave GOD, and GOD entices him back to Himself. This demonstrates how much greater GOD’s mercy and love are than man’s. Gomer did not deserve such treatment from Hosea, neither did Israel from GOD — but they both received it. The same can be said of unfaithful Christians today.

In counseling, when someone says, “*I have fallen out of love with my mate*,” the root problem is often a lack of communication and that they have found someone or something else to love. When a man stops speaking to GOD (his prayers) and stops listening to GOD (His Holy Word), he soon stops loving GOD and seeks someone or something on which to bestow his affections.

When GOD brought the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, He took them into the wilderness where they could be separated from the wickedness of the nations around them. It was there that He instructed them: (1) giving them a law, (2) teaching them how to worship Him acceptably, and (3) in general showing His great love for them. The reclamation of Gomer and Israel is likened to this experience. Hosea would entice Gomer away from her lovers to a deserted place where she would be separated from the evil influences she had formerly served. There he would speak

words of reassurance and comfort to her. GOD would do this to Israel through her captivity. Her suffering would not be for nought; her journey into captivity would bring Israel to her knees and prepare her for the eventual return to GOD.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

GOD has always called His people out of the bondage of sin to partake of His unbounded love and mercy. **“Be ye separate, saith the Lord.”**

Hosea 2:15 “And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

“And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall make answer there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

GOD’s mercies would go beyond words of comfort; He would restore the former blessings to her.

“The valley of Achor’ (of troubling), a barren and desolate area west of the north end of the Dead Sea, where Achan and his family had been stoned, would be to them a door of hope. The judgment through which she must pass and the captivity of Assyria (11:5) would be a door through which she must enter into the new life with God” (Hailey, p. 143). (Cf. Joshua 7)

Along this line of thinking, one might

also remember Israel's history of being troubled in Egyptian bondage. They were taken into the wilderness of Sinai where the nation was cleansed of sin and idolatry in order to enter the promised land of Canaan to enjoy the rest promised and provided by GOD.

What a contrast is seen in this verse. There would be great sorrow because of the captivity she had to go into, but when the time of release came, there would be as much joy as there had been pain and sorrow. This is illustrated by her former release from Egyptian bondage. Her sorrow had been great in Egypt, but her joy was overflowing upon her release from that captivity. Man often does not realize his blessings until he loses them, or some great calamity comes upon him.

The allegory of this passage speaks of the time of the Messiah. Some of Israel, with the Gentiles, leaving the troubling of sin to rejoice as the new Israel — the church. What a time of great blessing and rejoicing as the new relationship with Christ is realized.

Hosea 2:16 “And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call Me Ishi; and shalt call Me no more Baali.”

“And it shall be at that day, saith Jehovah, that thou shalt call Me Ishi, and shalt call Me no more Baali.” (ASV)

Two more significant names are introduced in this text. “**Ishi**” means “*my husband*,” and “**Baali**” means “*my master*” or “*Lord*.” (Note the similarity between “**Baali**” and the term used for these false gods — “**Baalim**.”) Most commentators consider “**Ishi**” to be an expression of tender love, whereas “**Baali**” refers in this passage as recognizing the Lord out of fear. While the term “**Baali**” might be used in a correct way by a woman with regard to her husband, it was never to be used again by GOD's people to signify His relationship to

them. Why? Is it possible this was true because the word Baal was in it, a term used to signify a false god? If so, then it signifies that no possible association was to be made between GOD and a false god.

The significance of these words seems to be found in their formerly placing GOD on an equal basis, or level, with the Baalim through the use of the word “**Baali**.” After their trials and afflictions, they would no longer put GOD on an equal basis with these gods, but would view Him in a much greater relationship. GOD would again become their husband.

“The church calls God her husband, when she stands in the right relation to Him; when she acknowledges, reveres, and loves Him, as He has revealed Himself, i.e., as the only true God” (Keil & Delitzsch, p. 62).

Hosea 2:17 “For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.”

“For I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be mentioned by their name.” (ASV)

One of the greatest things which happened in Israel's captivity was the elimination of idolatry from the lives of the people. GOD later told Judah the same thing.

“It shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land” (Zechariah 13:2).

In noting subsequent history, after the captivities of the two nations (Israel and Judah), the Jews never again served a graven image of any kind. Is it not strange that man today has not learned the lesson

portrayed in these prophecies? Man today takes as his gods money, power, prestige, education, science, lusts of all sorts, sports, et cetera.

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

One should be able to look at what happened to both Israel and Judah and (1) see their mistakes, (2) see the consequences of their idolatrous behavior, and (3) stay away from such idolatry. Yet, many today raise up idols which they faithfully serve instead of giving their faithfulness to GOD. One must understand that anything he serves (puts first) before GOD is an idol to that man. Dear friend, do you have an idol in your heart? Do you place anything or anyone on a higher plain in your heart than the place you give GOD? If you do, then you serve an idol! An idol is not simply a graven object. It can even be ideas such as evolution, environmentalism, humanism, et cetera.

Graham sees the goodness of GOD manifested in these passages and says, *“Divine efforts here indicated include words to allure her, trials to discipline her, vineyards to pacify her, and a new spiritual vocabulary to manifest her changed heart”* (p. 100).

Hosea 2:18 “And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.”

“And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of the heavens, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will make them to lie

down safely.” (ASV)

Nature itself is in subjection to the will of GOD. Formerly GOD said He would turn their fields over to the beasts and fowl (v. 12); now He will turn the fields back to the people. After their return from the captivity, those who did return would not be invaded and taken captive again.

GOD also revealed the nature of His coming kingdom, telling them that it will be a powerful, peaceful nation. It will be a kingdom which does not need physical weapons to perpetuate itself; it will be a spiritual kingdom.

This could also (or may be the total implication here), refer to the time when the Israelites might return from captivity (the very few who did). Those who would be allowed to return would not do so through their own power; it would be accomplished by GOD.

The church should bring, and can bring, peace to all of mankind through obedience to GOD’s Word — if the world would but listen to His Word. But what about a lack of peace which too often exists in congregations? When one finds such a situation, it is because one or both parties involved have strayed from GOD’s Word. War exists in the camp because one or all parties involved **refuse** to recognize the absolute authority of GOD’s Word.

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:1-3).

Barnes makes this interesting comment on the phrase **“will make them to lie**

down safely.”

“Fearless, the Christian lies down during life, at peace with God, his neighbor, and his own conscience; fearless, because perfect love casteth out fear; and fearless in death also, because resting in Jesus, in everlasting, unfailing, unfading peace” (p. 38).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto GOD. And the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

Hosea 2:19 “And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.”

“And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in justice, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” (ASV)

This is still speaking of the time to come — the Christian dispensation. Israel had been betrothed once, had become unfaithful, and now was to be divorced from her former husband. GOD would raise up a new bride (the church) for His Son. This represents the two covenants. Israel had lived under GOD’s covenant of marriage, but there would be another covenant, another marriage. Stuart gives one more information about these ancient marriage practices.

The “ancient Israelite practice of settling marriages contractually by the groom’s payment of the bride-price to the bride’s father. This was the final step in the courtship process, virtually equivalent in legal

status to the wedding ceremony. After the betrothal, cohabitation would follow at an arranged time” (Stuart as quoted by Caldwell, p. 102).

Five words represent the basis upon which this new betrothal would rest (four in this verse and the other in the next verse).

RIGHTEOUSNESS — According to the law and reason, none can have more righteousness than GOD.

JUDGMENT — refers to decisions set forth according to what is right. This will be for those who live according to GOD’s laws and against those who are lawless and without GOD.

LOVINGKINDNESS — is tenderness, tender affection for those who do His will because they are His obedient creation.

MERCIES — compassion shown for His creation and their weaknesses. This probably includes His complete blotting out of one’s sins when obedience to the conditions set forth by GOD have been met by the sinner.

This new relationship is a new covenant of marriage, referring to that which Jeremiah had prophesied concerning the new Israel.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 31:31-32).

“Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with

them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:15-17).

Hosea 2:20 “I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.”

“I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know Jehovah.” (ASV)

Here we see the last of the words upon which this betrothal is to stand — FAITHFULNESS. This is the act of being true to one’s promises. GOD sets forth His promises, and man has a full assurance that they will be fulfilled simply because He spoke them. Thus, in fulfillment of His grand design, GOD sent His Son to establish His new family — the new Israel of GOD. It must also be considered that GOD will always maintain faithfulness. He will never be unfaithful to His people. They may become unfaithful to Him and give up their relationship to Him. But when such happens, it can never be blamed on GOD’s being unfaithful. Let it be clearly acknowledged that Israel of old became unfaithful to GOD, He divorced them, and now there is a new bride — the church.

The following five words might also be noticed which show the role of man in this betrothal.

RIGHTEOUSNESS — is a contrast with the defiled life Christians lived as alien sinners. Human righteousness is based upon a compliance with the laws of GOD and upon GOD’s declaration that one is righteous. Christians must strive to live righteous lives to fulfil their side of the covenant relationship.

JUDGMENT — In life, one’s judgments must be based upon what is just and right according to the standard set by GOD. The

standard for such decisions is the Word of GOD.

Food for thought: **“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters”** (1 Corinthians 6:2)?

LOVINGKINDNESS — Christians being loving people, loving one another as Christ loves them. **“This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you”** (John 15:12). The kind of love Christ showed will cause one to be kind and sacrificial in his dealings with others.

MERCY — **“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful”** (Luke 6:36). This would include having a forgiving spirit and cautions against making one’s judgments in harshness, possibly in a vindictive manner. All judgments should be made upon solid facts and according to GOD’s Word.

FAITHFULNESS — Christians must hold steadfastly to GOD’s laws and promises. He deserves one’s full dedication to Him, just as He is fully dedicated to man’s salvation.

“And thou shalt know the Lord.” Through the afflictions endured and the subsequent blessings of GOD, they would know Him once again. They would once again recognize His right to be their only GOD. Thus after the Babylonian captivity, they never turned back to idolatry again. But the phrase **“thou shalt know the Lord”** points even further down the road of time to the Christian dispensation. Jeremiah predicted this.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to

bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (31:31-34).

This was the promise of the New Covenant which the writer of Hebrews quoted and applied to the Christian era.

“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a GOD, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (8:10-13).

To attempt to know the Lord is to seek eternal life. But He can only be known through His Word.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD”
(Romans 10:17).

Man can know GOD, and it is his duty to seek Him.

Hosea 2:21 **“And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;”**

“And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, saith Jehovah, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth;” (ASV)

There is no question that this verse is still speaking of the same time as those before it — the Christian dispensation. Revitalization of a dry, parched land (Gentiles) can only come about when the heavens provide what the earth needs, the blessings of rain (showers of blessings). Just as rain is a physical blessing from the heavens upon the land, so also are the mercies of salvation which would fall upon the Gentiles and fallen tribes of Israel.

This highly figurative language shows that **“in the day”** (the Christian dispensation) GOD willingly hears His people. His blessings will come because of their cries for His mercy and their willingness to respond to His love. Consider that His willingness to hear and bless His people is based upon faithfulness — both His and His people’s faithfulness.

Hosea 2:22 **“And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.”**

“and the earth shall answer the grain, and the new wine, and the oil; and they shall answer Jezreel.” (ASV)

There were physical blessings for those of Israel who returned, but this is speaking of the spiritual blessings and prosperity which would come through the Gospel of

Christ.

The word “**Jezreel**” is used again and seems to predict the “scattering” (sowing) which was to be accomplished many years later on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Note a similar thought in Second Corinthians 6:16-18.

“What agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? for ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Note the requirement: For GOD to be one’s GOD and for man to be His people, there must be a separation from that which is unclean.

Hosea 2:23 **“And I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my GOD.”**

“And I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my GOD.” (ASV)

The “**her**” in this passage must apply to the church. Notice two passages in the New Testament which quote from this passage, and then notice their application.

“As He saith also in Osee, I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the

place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the living GOD” (Romans 9:25-26).

“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of GOD: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:10).

Those who were not GOD’s people were to become GOD’s people. This can only refer to the Gentiles (who had never been His people) and the Israelites (who because of their unfaithfulness were put out from being His people and thus were no better than the Gentiles). When this time came, they would accept GOD and call Him “**my GOD**” — a very personal relationship. Thus, the passage clearly predicts the time when all people of the earth may be in the **one** family of GOD — the church. There is no longer a dividing line (wall) between physical Jews and Gentiles — **ALL** are one in Christ.

“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto GOD in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Hosea

Chapter Three

Hosea 3:1 **“Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.”**

“And Jehovah said unto me, Go again, love a woman beloved of her friend, and an adulteress, even as Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins.”

(ASV)

The first two words in this verse which draw one's attention are "**woman**" and "**friend**." These terms apply to Gomer ("**woman**") and Hosea ("**friend**"). The term "**woman**" simply refers to a female without regard to a position she might hold to another individual. Gomer was no longer considered as a wife, having been put away for her adultery. Now she is simply a woman who continues to be loved by a friend. Even though she has been unfaithful to Hosea, he has continued to love her in spite of her unfaithfulness to him. He loved her in the beginning. He loved her even after she became an adulteress. He loved her after he put her away (divorce). And he loved her when he brought her back home.

The parallel being taught is that GOD continued to love His people though they had become spiritual adulterers. He loved them even when they had been taken away into Assyrian captivity, wrapped in the arms of their lover. When they learned their lesson, GOD brought them back to Himself and loved them as He had before they became adulterers. Can Christians become adulterers today?

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD" (James 4:4).

Can GOD love the Christian who becomes an adulterer? Will GOD take back a Christian adulterer when he learns his lesson and yearns to return to Him?

"Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to GOD, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn,

and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:7-10).

GOD continued to love Israel in spite of her wickedness. He did not love Israel's adulteress behavior — He hated that, but loved the people. Yet, His love for the people did not mean He would tolerate their sin. The church today needs to make sure it learns the lesson contained in this passage with regard to the procedure of withdrawing fellowship from unfaithful brethren. When the withdrawal of fellowship is done correctly, Christians must hate the act(s) of sin, but love the soul of the one who commits the trespass. This same principle applies to alien sinners. Christians must hate the sin in which they are engaged and yet love their souls. Like GOD, Christians must stand ready to receive both the erring Christian and the alien sinner when they recognize their error and seek GOD.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).

GOD had provided everything the people of Israel needed, even making them a mighty nation filled with riches. He had abundantly supplied them with all of their needs. Instead of attributing their wealth to Him, they had come to the point that they attributed all of their blessings to the gods of the nations around them and bowed themselves to these gods. Why did they do this? The phrase "**love flagons of wine**" (*"love the raisin cakes of the pagans,"* NKJV) provides the answer. This is a symbol of the sensuality and worldliness in which the pagan world revolved. This sensual appetite was all that mattered to them. The Israelites, falling into this trap of Satan, moved away from GOD and embraced the gods of the

people around them. They had become adulterers and adulteresses!

Hosea 3:2 “So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:”

“So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer of barley, and a half-homer of barley;” (ASV)

The first thing which should be pointed out is that GOD gave Hosea a command which he obeyed right away. This should be the attitude of everyone, especially GOD’s people. **“Speak, LORD; for Thy servant heareth”** (1 Samuel 3:9), listening with the combined attitude of *“I will do what GOD tells me to do.”*

It appears that Gomer had either sold herself as a concubine slave or that she had been sold by someone else (a lover) into slavery. Man needs to understand that when he gives himself over to sin, he has made himself a slave to sin (i.e., a slave to Satan) and needs to be redeemed.

“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34).

The price paid for Gomer was fifteen pieces of silver and one-and-a-half homers of barley. The total amount is believed to be the equivalent of thirty pieces of silver, which was the price paid for a wounded slave.

“If the ox shall push (“gore,” ASV) a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned” (Exodus 21:32).

It might be considered here that the Lord was betrayed for the price of thirty pieces of silver. The Sanhedrin thought no more of Jesus than they would a useless, gored slave. What think ye of the Lord?

Hosea 3:3 “And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be

for another man: so will I also be for thee.”

“and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man’s wife: so will I also be toward thee.” (ASV)

Barnes states that the phrase **“thou shalt abide for me many days,”** could literally be translated, *“thou shalt sit, solitary and as a widow.”* If this be the case, it may mean she must go through a period of isolation in order to purify herself and rid herself of desire for any other than her husband. This appears to be a period of proving herself. The closest human communion is found in the sexual act of which this passage says there will be none.

In considering the parallels here — Hosea/Gomer and GOD/Israel, one can see the prediction for the people of Israel. They had isolated themselves from GOD through their adultery (idolatry) and would be put away. In captivity, they would have the opportunity to reflect upon their adultery and renouncing their lovers (false gods), prove their determination to return to GOD through refusing to participate in the idolatry any more. They have been separated from the true communion with GOD by separation from the Temple. Just here, let it be remembered that when Judah returned from captivity, it was not just those from Judah who returned. All who desired to return to the homeland could, and some from every tribe did.

During this time of isolation, GOD would not “marry” another nation but would continue to care for Israel. This is seen in the prophets which were sent to them to give them hope and — on occasion — protection (Esther). But full communion was not restored until they had learned their lesson and their desire to return to Him grew.

“Here the story of Hosea’s personal tragedy ends. We wish we could

visit the patient prophet from time to time, to see how he is getting along. Does Gomer truly repent? Does she weep bitter tears over her disgraceful life? What do the children think? Does Gomer finally give her heart unreservedly to Hosea? How does she get along with her gossipy neighbors? Does she ever get her good name back? Do Hosea and Gomer live happily ever after” (Phillips, p. 47)?

Hosea 3:4 “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:”

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim:” (ASV)

There would be no choice with regard to the people of Israel’s abiding **“many days without,”** for they would be in captivity. There would be no king or princes, i.e., they would not have their own political system — the freedom of the nation was taken away.

Sacrifice was the center of worship under the Hebrew system, but while in captivity they would not be able to make the sacrifices required. They had given up the proper sacrificial system by leaving the Temple worship and instead worshipping idols. The sacrifices at the Tabernacle/Temple were meant to prepare the people for the ultimate sacrifice, that of Jesus on the cross. Has sacrifice ended today? True, Christians are not required to make blood sacrifices, yet a sacrifice is demanded of all obedient believers.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable

service” (Romans 12:1).

The word **“images”** comes from the Hebrew word massebah — *“Literally, it is something which is stationed, i.e., a column, a pillar, a memorial stone, a monument, a statue (usually of idols); a stump, a trunk”* (Zodhiates, CD).

The **“ephod”** probably refers to the garment of the High Priest which he wore in religious ceremony. It had the names of the twelve tribes but more importantly to this text, it held the Urim and Thummin. These items were used by GOD to give them information, to communicate to the people through the High Priest. When asked a question, the High Priest would reach into this pocket and draw out one of these items and, depending on which one was drawn out, the answer was either yes or no. Let it clearly be understood that this was not a fifty-percent chance, but rather was determined by GOD as to which item would be drawn.

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD” (Proverbs 16:33).

The **“teraphim”** were family gods which were primarily objects of pagan superstition which were sometimes used as objects of pagan divination. Based on superstition, they were simply matters of chance. Today, things like Ouija boards, tara cards, et cetera, would be examples of this kind of worthless superstition.

When looking at the things mentioned in this verse, it is seen that they would be without the government GOD desired for them, without systems of worship, and without divine guidance. It did not matter if these things were legitimate (given by GOD) or illegitimate (guided by their own will).

“During the Assyrian captivity, the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom actually suffered this punishment from Jehovah. Then she was

separated from her land, had no ruler of her own, enjoyed no word from the Lord, and engaged in no religious service” (Graham, p. 109)

Another thought which is valuable to be remembered is that, though the text particularly deals with the northern ten tribes (Israel), the warning given to her was also given to the southern kingdom (Judah).

“And he (the prophet Azariah, RK) **went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you. Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true GOD, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD GOD of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for GOD did vex them with all adversity. Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded”** (2 Chronicles 15:2-7).

Hosea 3:5 “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their GOD, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.”

“afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their GOD, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to His goodness in the latter days.” (ASV)

After all of these things and privileges were taken from Israel, then she would return in a search for GOD. But before Israel could return, she had to learn a lesson — she had to be humbled just as Gomer had to be humbled. Before one can seek to better himself in any area, he must first understand his pitiful condition.

“The kingdom would be destroyed, the nation scattered (Jezreel); they would be without mercy (Lo-ruhamah), not God’s people (Lo-ammi)” (Hailey, p. 146).

After their humiliation, they would seek GOD and **“David their king.”** They could not seek King David in the flesh, for he had been long dead; but rather they would seek the one whom he represented. To the Jewish mind, David epitomized the perfect ruler; but in such he was only the type of the truly perfect ruler — the Christ.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4).

When would all of this happen? **“In the latter days.”** What time are these latter days or last days? Have these days come, or are they yet future events? What do the

Scriptures say about these questions? In Acts chapter two, the apostles were endued with power from on High and began to teach the people using languages they had never learned. Some of the people began to mock them, even claiming that they were drunk (I have never known a drunk to begin speaking in a language he had never studied, much less speak coherently in his own language.). After receiving this false charge, Peter quoted from Joel, telling them this was the fulfillment of the prophecies.

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith GOD, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:16-17, emphasis mine, RK).

When were the last days of which Hosea, Joel and the other prophets spoke? They began on that Pentecost — the beginning of the church, not after the “church age.” Notice also the words of Hebrews 1:1-2.

“GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2, emphasis mine, RK).

Carefully note that Peter said the “**last days**” were after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Peter said the “**last days**” began with the apostles’ speaking in other languages on the first Pentecost after the Lord’s resurrection. The writer of Hebrews said the same thing. Both Peter and the Hebrews writer lived during the last days. So what are the “last days?” They cannot be anything other than the Christian dispensation — the church age! Thus, the Bible refutes the premillennial fairy tale of a millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Hosea

Chapter Four

Hosea 4:1 “Hear the Word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of GOD in the land.”

“Hear the Word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of GOD in the land.” (ASV)

In the previous chapters, GOD used Hosea and Gomer’s relationship to illustrate in a figurative way the relationship which He had with Israel. GOD’s wife (Israel) had been unfaithful (adulterous) to Him. In this chapter no illustration is used, but rather, GOD bluntly confronts Israel with her sins.

The very first thing which should be observed in this verse is the admonition she is given — **“Hear the Word of the Lord.”** It is interesting to note that this is a common refrain throughout the Scriptures in many different ways. GOD has always commanded that man is to hear His words, both in the Old and New Testaments. Why should man **“hear the Word of the Lord?”** Note what Jesus said about this matter.

“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

To whom is GOD speaking in this text? It is the ten northern tribes known at this time as Israel. This is seen more clearly in verse fifteen, where the contrast is shown between Israel and Judah. Later, GOD would have a controversy with Judah (12:2), but at the present time the controversy is with the northern tribes of Israel.

The word **“controversy”** speaks of a legal action, a lawsuit or case of law.

“It means quarrel, contest (personal

or legal), strife, contention, controversy, feud, dispute, a judicial or forensic cause, a lawsuit, litigation, a plea; an adversary” (Zodhiates, CD).

At one time GOD had been their strength, their defender; but now He is their adversary. They departed from GOD, so He brought a lawsuit against them because they had broken their agreement (covenant) with Him. Part of that covenant was the promise of a land in which to dwell as His nation, a promise which He had kept.

“The LORD gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein” (Joshua 21:43).

Why had GOD given them this land?

GOD **“gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; That they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws”** (Psalm 105:44-45, emphasis mine, RK).

They no longer observed His statutes; they did not keep His laws. Therefore, He brings this lawsuit against them — He will take back what He had given them. This would be accomplished through their captivity because of their spiritual adultery.

The summation of the sins which caused this lawsuit is **“there is no truth or mercy”** found among them. Pilate asked Jesus, **“What is truth?”** His question was/is a valid one. What is truth. The truth of which Hosea speaks in this text is GOD’s Word. Note the words of Jesus on this matter.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also

might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:17-19).

Ultimately, the only truth which matters is what GOD says on any matter. They had rejected His truth, and now GOD is warning them that He will reject them. Consider this — when man rejects the truth which GOD has given him, what happens to morality? What happened in the Gentile world when GOD’s truth was rejected? Look at Romans chapter one for the answer to that question. Further, look at morality in America today because of a rapidly growing rejection of GOD’s Word.

Further, there was no mercy among them. Zodhiates states the Hebrew word means, *“an act of kindness, love or mercy shown to someone. The quality shown to someone. The quality of the kindness shown is usually that reserved for close friends and family members, but the act of chasRadh can be shown to anyone. Thus, while chasRadh describes kindnesses shown to friends and relatives, it can also pass between guest and host, master and servant, or even ruler and subject”* (CD). The mercy of GOD, as sovereign ruler, was expressed toward Israel even though she often rebelled against Him. Note the particular relationship which Zodhiates states regarding a master and servant. There is in the New Testament a very good illustration of what Israel had done as indicated in the statement here that there was no mercy in the land. In Matthew 18:23ff, there is the parable of the unmerciful servant. Here the servant owed his master an amount so large that it could never be repaid. When he begged for forgiveness, the debt was forgiven because of the compassion of his master. This same servant was owed a very small amount by a fellow servant. When his fellow servant begged for mercy, the first servant refused to give him what he had himself received. What was the result?

“Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:33-35).

Why was there no truth or mercy in the land? It was because there was no knowledge of GOD in the land. Did they know there was a GOD? Certainly they did. This reveals what knowledge of GOD entails. It is not simply an academic knowledge of GOD which is sufficient — though that knowledge is absolutely essential. The knowledge which saves and avoids condemnation is the one which acts upon what is academically known. Academic knowledge of GOD will cause one to learn about Him and hopefully love Him. But what happens when one *“falls out of love”* with GOD? It has been observed over the years that when people lose their love for GOD, they generally stop studying His Word and thus rapidly lose that which would produce the love necessary to invoke obedience to Him. With a lack of love and knowledge, the desire to please Him grows faint and will lead to rebellion to Him.

Hosea 4:2 “By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.”

“There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood.” (ASV)

SWEARING — “To swear, to make a solemn oath” (Zodhiates, CD).

BREAK OUT — “A verb meaning to break out, to break down, to burst forth. It indicates the powerful multiplication and spreading of something in all directions” (Zodhiates, p. 922). “The common meaning of *parats* is to tear or break — break in upon, especially with violence, as robbers and murderers” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 98).

When one looks at the list of sins listed here, he sees half of the ten commandments violated (The third, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth.). Barnes states that these are nouns of action (p. 46), which shows they were ongoing, or everyday occurrences.

All the boundaries between good and evil were being broken down, until like the dykes of Holland, once broken, the flood waters of sin were able to claim the land/heart for their own. Their sins had beaten against the walls of righteousness until a small crack appeared. That crack was widened, allowing more sins to pass through, until finally the wall of restraint was broken down. The wall of GOD’s restraining law which protected them (their hearts) was broken down, and sin covered the land like a blanket. When isolated cases of sin are tolerated in the church or society, it will not be long until another is tolerated, then another and another until all restraint is gone. Note the connection here with the previous verse. “Where there is no truth there will be lies and perjury...when there is no mercy, killing, slaying, and murders will be frequent” (Clarke, p. 631).

“As the people break through the restraining power of divine law; once the fence is breached, atrocities like these begin to pile up” (Graham, p. 114).

“**Blood toucheth blood**” indicates that no sooner would an act of bloodshed be committed than another would follow. Murder was commonplace, which can be seen as the latter kings of Israel often died by assassination and not natural deaths.

When respect for GOD diminishes in the human heart, respect for human beings will quickly lose all significance — the law of the jungle will prevail.

Hosea 4:3 “**Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.**”

“Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.” (ASV)

LANGUISH — *amal* — “A verb meaning to languish, be feeble, pine away” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 69).

TAKEN AWAY — *asap* — “To gather, remove, gather in, collect, take away, destroy” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to gather, to take away, to harvest” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 80).

“**Therefore,**” because of the sins Israel had given themselves to as enumerated above.

“‘Therefore,’ illustrates the ancient law of cause and effect, of sowing and reaping” (Phillips, p. 48).

There are always consequences for actions, whether they be good or bad actions. It is the same idea of sowing and reaping as mentioned above by Phillips. This is illustrated in the following verses.

“**Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy**” (Hosea 10:12).

“**Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same**” (Job 4:8).

Drought was forecast as a punishment for GOD’s people when they violated His

laws and became ungodly.

“Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed” (Deuteronomy 28:23-24).

“‘Therefore:’ because of this moral decay desolation would come upon the land, a desolation so terrible that even all nature would be affected by it — the land, the people, and the living creatures” (Hailey, p. 148).

In considering the future, Israel was to be taken into captivity, and the land would be left desolate. How would this affect the creatures of the land? Where crops are kept, many animals would be fed therefrom. Take away the abundant food sources of such crops, and the animals which feed upon such would diminish. The birds of the air frequently feed upon the crops of man, but with no crops they also would suffer. With the lack of crops there would be fewer insects and seeds washed into the water, and the fish also would suffer. In time of drought, farmers would have to cut back on how many domesticated animals they kept because they could not feed them; thus, the food chain for human beings would be disrupted. Drought can be a devastating thing, changing the landscape for generations to come.

Carefully note that man’s sins have far greater consequences than to just himself, but they can and do affect all of the creation.

Hosea 4:4 “Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.”

“Yet let no man strive, neither let any man reprove; for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.” (ASV)

STRIVE — *riyb* — *“To toss; to grapple, wrangle, strive; to contend, quarrel, hold a controversy, plead, conduct a legal case, make a charge, defend, be an adversary; to complain, to debate, contend forensically, plead a cause or case; (part.) a pleader, a defender; an adversary”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to strive, to contend, to dispute, and to conduct a lawsuit. The verb means to conduct a lawsuit or legal case and all that it involves”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1051).

REPROVE — *yakah* — *“To dispute with someone, argue: to be convicted, reprove; to decide, judge; to prove; to rebuke, reprove, correct; to mediate, arbitrate; to punish; to chide”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to argue, to convince, to convict, to judge, to reprove”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 446).

“Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another.” The Bible teaches that man should be reprovved when he transgresses GOD’s laws.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

But sometimes man goes so far away from GOD that reproof will not do any good. A good example of this is found in Matthew chapter fifteen. The readers remember that Jesus had called the Pharisees hypocrites. His disciples then came to Him and asked if He knew that the Pharisees were offended at His words. Notice what Jesus told them.

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall

into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

The Pharisees did not want to see the truth and would not accept it if it were told them. In effect, Jesus told them not to waste their breath on such people.

The people of the present text seem to be just as bad as the ones they might try to reprove, i.e., none of them was trying to obey GOD, so none of them had the right to reprove one another.

“Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye” (Matthew 7:3)?

Like the people of Jesus' day, **“this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”** (Matthew 13:15).

Some believe this refers to the people trying to rationalize their evil deeds. If so, there is no way they can succeed — so they should not even try. This writer believes the former is the correct understanding of this passage.

“For thy people are as they that strive with the priest.” The Israelites had become like people who strive with the priests. GOD had given His laws into the hands of the priests with the admonition that they were to teach them to His people. The people had an obligation to hear them and obey without contending and quarreling with them. To quarrel with GOD's appointed priests was the same as quarreling with GOD Himself.

“That ye (the priests, RK) may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses” (Leviticus 10:11).

The text clearly points back to GOD's law found in Deuteronomy 17:8-11.

“If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy GOD shall choose; And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left.”

What did GOD say should be done with a man who would quarrel (strive) with the priests?

“And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy GOD, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously” (Deuteronomy 17:12-13).

To strive against the priests was to strive

against the authority they possessed and to strive against the One who gave them that authority. If one refuses authority, it is useless to try to reprove him. He will not accept the reproof, because he does not accept the authority behind the reproof.

It seems significant that the text says, **“for thy people are as they that strive with the priests.”** Hosea did not say, *“for thy people are they that strive.”* This indicates a truth which can be seen not only in the writings of this prophet, but others also — the priests did not appear to be teaching people the truth they needed. With the rebellious state they were in, there **would have been striving** with the priests if the priests had been faithfully proclaiming GOD’s Word.

The priests were as guilty as the people of turning away from GOD. The priests should have been watchmen who warned the people of the danger they were in — but they did not.

“Whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. 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” (Ezekiel 33:4-6).

A nation will never be any stronger than those who are in authority. If the rulers are corrupt, then the nation will follow their example. This is true whether one speaks of a secular or spiritual kingdom.

“An astonishing and horrible thing

Has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end” (Jeremiah 5:30-31; NKJV)?

Hosea 4:5 “Therefore you shall stumble in the day; The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; And I will destroy your mother.”

“Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.” (ASV)

MOTHER — em — *“A feminine noun meaning mother, a woman with children. The word may also signify a female ancestor, animals, of humans in general. A nation or city is sometimes viewed as the mother of its people. So in that sense, this word is sometimes used to refer to a nation”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 66).

The daytime is the time people think less about stumbling and falling, and the time when people do not tend to fear being attacked. One can clearly see dangers which may threaten him in the daylight and tends not to worry during that time. Thus, this passage seems to show that the people of Israel had reached a stage where they could not see the danger which faced them, even though the dangers were in plain sight. GOD had clearly warned them of what would happen to them if they abandoned Him for the false gods of paganism. The night is a time when many think they can hide their deeds from others, but the false prophets would not be able to hide their dark deeds. Combined, this may mean *“that people and prophet alike would fall together, at all times, both by day and by night, that is to say, there would be no time free from the coming calamities; and there would be no possibility of escape, either for the sinful people or their unfaithful*

priests” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 100).

The prophets of this passage must be the false prophets, those who prophesied lies and deceits (this would include the priests). GOD would never cause the faithful prophets to fall. It should be remembered that Jeroboam I had instituted the unfaithful priesthood of Israel.

“He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi” (1 Kings 12:31).

To this was added the prophets of Baal by Jezebel (1 Kings 16-21), until the whole system of true religion in the ten tribes was destroyed.

They were all going to fall, and even their **“mother,”** which represents the nation, would fall. Some believe the word **“mother”** represents the capital city (Samaria). When the capital falls, the nation has fallen. Collectively, the nation would lose its existence. After the Assyrian captivity, the ten tribes never became a distinct nation again.

The truths shown in these passages should be a warning to GOD’s people in all generations — yes, even in the church. When GOD’s people start turning to false religion and its “prophets” (preachers) and begin mixing truth with error, then destruction is near and certain for those who will not go back to pure religion. Notice that when a nation gives itself to false religion, that nation can no longer stand as a mighty nation. America, are you listening as you move further and further away from GOD’s standard? Church, are you listening as you compromise to avoid human conflict and seek popularity?

Hosea 4:6 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me:

seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy GOD, I also will forget thy children.”

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy GOD, I will also forget thy children.” (ASV)

KNOWLEDGE — daat — *“This noun means knowledge, insight, intelligence, understanding, wisdom, cunning”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine noun meaning knowledge, knowing, learning, discernment, insight, and notion. The word occurs forty of its ninety-one times in Proverbs as one of the many words associated with the biblical concept of wisdom”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 245).

“For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it” (Ecclesiastes 7:12).

REJECTED (REJECT) — maas — *“To melt, melt away, dissolve; to feel undone. It has the sense of flowing or running out”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to reject, to despise, to abhor, to refuse. The primary meaning of this word is to reject or treat as loathsome”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 562).

THE LAW — torah — *“A feminine noun meaning instruction, direction, law, Torah, the whole Law... This word torah is used as a summary term of various bodies of legal, cultic, or civil instructions. The word refers to the entire book of Deuteronomy and Moses’ exposition of the Torah found in it. By implication, the word here also refers to the laws given in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Numerous times this word refers to the whole Law of Moses, the Book of the Law of Moses, the Book of the Law of God, the Law of the Lord, and the Law of God given at Sinai (in order of titles listed, 1*

Kings 2:3; Neh. 8:1; Josh. 24:26; Psalm 1:2; Neh. 10:28-29) (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1220).

GOD says His people are **“destroyed for lack of knowledge.”** What **“knowledge”** is spoken of here? Is it general laws of science or knowledge of physical things? No. The knowledge spoken of in this passage is the knowledge of GOD and His laws, coupled with obedience to those laws. It is not enough to intellectually know something if that knowledge is not put to use. The knowledge of spiritual things is what will cause people to truly prosper. If a society with high morals is desired, the only way to achieve such is through obedience to GOD’s laws. If an orderly and law-abiding society is desired, the same thing is true. Every experiment man has devised to ignore the laws of GOD and develop moral societies has always failed and always will fail as long as the world is allowed to exist.

The people were ignorant of GOD’s laws. Ignorance of law has never been an excuse to escape punishment for violating that law. If one should go into a civil court in any nation and plead innocence on the grounds of ignorance, he will not get very far.

“Ignorance is never an excuse for wrong doing, especially if the party has the opportunity of knowing what is right” (Zerr, p. 280).

This reminds one of a passage in Second Peter 2:20-21.

“If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment

delivered unto them.”

The people of Israel had escaped the pollutions of the world when they were delivered from Egypt and purified in the wilderness. They entered a land flowing with milk and honey and were promised it would continue as such as long as they followed GOD’s Laws. But they turned away from those laws i.e., broke the contract with GOD, and GOD could no longer honor those promises. Instead, GOD had to honor His promise to destroy them when they turned from Him.

Not only does this passage show the people lacking knowledge, it also lays the blame for their lack of knowledge at the feet of the priests. Be it clearly understood: the people had a personal responsibility for knowing GOD’s law, but there is a greater responsibility placed upon the shoulders of teachers when knowledge is lacking.

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation” (James 3:1).

Knowledge of GOD is absolutely essential to eternal salvation. One cannot claim to know GOD until he is willing to obey His commands.

“Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

Just as the people of Hosea’s day rejected knowledge, so did they in the days of the apostle Paul. When the knowledge of GOD was rejected, man **“changed the truth of GOD into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever”** (Romans 1:25). Why did/do people exchange the truth for a lie? The answer is found in Romans 1:28 — **“they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge.”**

Man rejects the knowledge of GOD because he does not want someone telling him what to do and because he does not like GOD's laws. Because Israel had rejected GOD, He would in turn reject them. And so it is in any generation. America, are you listening? You have taken GOD out of the schools and other public areas of life, and you are trying to eliminate Him from society as a whole. You think you can find a human plan to save yourselves. Not only will you fail, America, but He will destroy you for such!

There is only one place to find saving knowledge. It is not found in any book of science, philosophy, or general consensus. Saving knowledge is only found in GOD's Word — the Bible. When men turn to any other source for salvation, only destruction will follow.

"There is an old and true saying which follows: 'No one is as blind as he who will not see, nor deaf as he who will not hear'" (Zerr, p. 281).

"In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:14-15).

Hosea 4:7 "As they were increased, so they sinned against Me: therefore will I change their glory into shame."

"As they were multiplied, so they sinned against Me: I will change their glory into shame." (ASV)

GLORY — kabod — *"It means weight, honor, esteem, glory, majesty; abundance, wealth"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine singular noun meaning honor, glory, majesty, wealth"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 493).

SHAME — qalon — *"A masculine noun referring to shame, disgrace. It refers to a feeling and condition of shame, of being put on display in mockery; or of being dishonored"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 996).

There is some disagreement on the word **"they"** in this passage. Some suppose it refers to the people, while others believe it refers to the priests. Question: *"Why could it not refer to both?"* As the people grew numerically, so would the priests. The word **"increased"** should also be carefully considered. Whether **"increased"** means they were increased in numbers or in wealth matters little, for the results were the same — **"they sinned against Me."** Verses six and eight, however, seem to point to the priests as the primary **"they"** in this context.

GOD had given them all of their increase — numbers, wealth, power. Instead of honoring Him for such, they abandoned Him and attributed their increase to the gods of their neighbors. The more GOD blessed them, the more they sinned against Him. A side note: GOD has richly blessed America; yet, sin has increased on a dramatic scale in recent years. Americans, in general, do not believe they need GOD. They think they can protect themselves, provide for their own needs, et cetera.

"Prosperity and power does not solve the problem of sin, crime and immorality. Prosperity without GOD only increases the problem" (Butler, p. 472).

Listen to GOD's warning to Israel about prosperity.

"And it shall be, when the LORD

thy GOD shall have brought thee into the land which He sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy GOD, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy GOD is a jealous GOD among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy GOD be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 6:10-15).

GOD said He would “**change their glory into shame.**” The things in which they gloried would be their shame, whether it be their prosperous position, growth of population, political power, or false gods. Both their growth and wealth had been provided by GOD, and yet they had used all of this, not to glorify Him, but had instead glorified sin and false gods.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Romans 1:22-23).

When man loses a proper conception of GOD, he begins picturing GOD as purely

human or like some animal or fowl.

“These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes” (Psalm 50:21).

If this passage is talking about the position of the priests, and this writer believes it is, they received glory as the religious leaders of the people. GOD is telling them that what has been gloried in is about to change into shame. The people will rightly no longer look up to them, will no longer hold them in honor, will no longer respect them.

Hosea 4:8 **“They eat up the sin of My people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.”**

“They feed on the sin of My people, and set their heart on their iniquity.” (ASV)

INIQUITY — awon — *“Perversity, perverseness, sin, guilt, a crime, a fault, iniquity, mischief; punishment, the penalty of sin; suffering, misery”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A masculine noun meaning iniquity, evil, guilt, punishment. This is one of the four main words indicating sin in the Old Testament. This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrongdoing”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 814).

“The priests fed themselves on the sins of the people; for the more the people sinned the more were the sacrifices offered for sin, and the more sacrifices, the more the benefits to the priests” (Hailey, p. 149).

The very leaders who should have been encouraging the people to live righteously were encouraging them to sin for their own

personal gain. This sounds very much like some religions which accept payment for sins — the “greater” the sin, the higher the price.

“My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace” (Jeremiah 50:6).

Baker/Carpenter show that one of the definitions for the original Hebrew word here (hattat) is “*sin offering*” (p. 330). The more the people sinned, the more sin offerings they would make. Since the priests received a portion of the sin offerings, the more the people sinned, the more the priests would receive. Thus, “**they set their heart on their iniquity,**” i.e., they would desire the people to sin more so they could “**eat up the sin of My people.**” In other words, they took pleasure in the fact the people sinned.

“Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:32).

“Kimchi, an ancient expositor, paraphrased the thinking of the priests thus: ‘When will they sin, and bring sin offering and trespass offering, that we may eat’” (Graham, p. 119)?

Is there any difference between the religious leaders of ancient Israel and those today who do not preach on sin for fear they will lose their popularity or alienate those who commit those sins? There is no difference at all. There are religious leaders today who are just as vile as those in Hosea’s day. They do not warn the sinner to flee from their impending doom. Instead

they speak smooth things and overlook sin so they can retain **earthly popularity** and a degree of **material security**. How many preachers in the Lord’s church today will not speak about specific sin because they know that to do such will be a **moving sermon**, creating hardship for their family and loss of finances? Sadder yet, are the elders who love to have it so, when they should be looking after the eternal well-being of GOD’s flock and demanding that sin be taught against.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (Isaiah 55:1-3).

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD” (Matthew 4:4).

Hosea 4:9 **“And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.”**

“And it shall be, like people, like priest; and I will punish them for their ways, and will requite them their doings.” (ASV)

PUNISH — paqad — “*To visit, inspect, review; to muster, number; to care for; look after; to miss; to chastise, punish; to attack;*

to appoint; to charge with, entrust; (as a part.) an officer, an overseer; to be visited; to be punished, to be mustered; to be missed; to be set over; to be entrusted with, to be charged with; to deposit, to lay up; to be appointed; to be punished; to be numbered; to be deposited” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to attend, to visit, and to search out. The word refers to someone (usually God) paying attention to persons, either to do them good or to bring punishment or harm” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 913).

WAYS — Derek — *“It means a going, walk, journey; way, path, road; mode, manner, course, way of life, lot in life, worship...More often it refers to the actions and behavior of men” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning path, journey, way. This common word is derived from the Hebrew darak, meaning to walk or to tread, from which the basic idea of this word comes: the path that is traveled” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 248).*

REWARD — sub — *“To turn back, turn oneself, turn around, return, come back” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1108).*

“The priest a wanderer from the narrow way;

The silly sheep, no wonder that they stray” (Quoted by Clarke, Vol. 4, p. 632).

One of the things being emphasized here is that there was no difference between the priests and the people. Both were equally guilty of rebelling against GOD. There should have been a difference. Whether it be the people or the priests, if one or the other rebelled against GOD, the other should remain steadfast in obedience

to Him. Children are often heard to say, *“But everyone else is doing it,”* as a means of trying to justify their doing something which their parents do not want them to do. This is the idea of what the Israelites were doing in this text. In essence they were saying, *“Everyone else is doing this or that, so that makes it right, and we should do it too.”* The priests especially had an obligation to hold the line and warn the people that their behavior would bring GOD’s wrath upon them.

“When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezekiel 33:8-9).

Individually, everyone has the responsibility to rebuke evil.

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:15).

Human beings often think that others will be punished for their sins, but they will not. Very often those in positions of authority, like the priests, believe this same thing, i.e., they are above the law given to others. Others will be punished, but they will not. The warning needs to be sounded today that it is no different now than it was in Hosea’s day. All who sin will be punished by a just GOD. Preachers and elders, are you listening? The priests of that day were allowing the people to lead them into sin, and they became just as corrupt as each other. Today, many elders are allowing the flock to lead them into relaxing GOD’s standards in congregations. This leads to a total

departure from GOD by all. Neither has an excuse — the led or the leader.

This passage clearly shows that the priests and people will suffer alike, because the fault of their condition lies squarely upon each individually. This is a great lesson which needs to be learned by all; no one will be able to blame another if he is lost — he can only blame himself. The Israelites were going to suffer humiliation and destruction at the hands of the Assyrians, which took place in 722 B.C.

GOD's Word is available and can be understood by anyone possessing an intelligent and **honest mind**.

“On the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15, emphasis mine, RK).

The mistake is often made of placing one's trust in another human being. When this happens, what usually occurs is a failure to compare what the other is saying or doing with GOD's Word. The first one follows on blindly and both fall into the ditch of eternal destruction (Cf Matthew 15:14).

Hosea 4:10 “For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.”

“And they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall play the harlot, and shall not increase; because they have left off taking heed to Jehovah.” (ASV)

WHOREDOME — zanah — *“To fornicate, commit fornication, be a harlot, play the harlot, commit adultery; to apostatize, have intercourse with false gods or foreigners; to seduce. The main idea is to commit illicit sexual intercourse, particularly with women. However, this strong image is used in a figurative sense to describe illegal contact*

between Israel and other nations and their gods” (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute...figuratively, Israel's improper relationships with other nations or other gods. As a metaphor, it describes Israel's breach of the Lord's covenant relationship”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 297).

“For they shall eat, and not have enough.” Two ideas are possible in the first phrase of this verse. First, because of want of substance either from drought or disease, they would eat what they had, and it would not be enough — they would be hungry. Second, because of greed, the more one has, the more he wants; thus, he is never satisfied. It is the latter thought which first springs into this writer's mind, although both may be included. GOD had blessed them with abundance, but they were not satisfied; wanting more, they turned to their neighbors and their idols to achieve their goals. But the time was quickly coming when they would not have the things they wanted, for GOD was going to cause the land to be barren (drought promised in 4:3).

Their whoredoms (idol worship) were going to work against them, from the standpoint that they would participate in them, but no fruit would come from their efforts. They would not receive blessings from their actions as they had hoped, whether they be spiritual (no blessings) or physical (no fruit of the womb).

Why were they not going to have any fruit of the land or the womb? Because they had **“left off to take heed to the Lord.”** They had taken their eyes off of the Lord, which indicates a lack of desire to do His will — they quit obeying Him.

“God's blessings are given conditionally, when man refuses those conditions, God will not force His blessings on him. When that happens, man is left frustrated, lost and hopeless. Man cannot hope to

defeat God so man, the enemy, is defeated" (Butler, p. 473)!

Failure to keep one's eyes on the Lord and the destruction which will follow are illustrated by a New Testament example. In Matthew 14:25-30, one sees the Lord walking on the water toward the disciples. Peter asked to be permitted to walk on the water to the Lord, which was granted to him. He started out well, but when he looked around him and saw the danger of the world, his faith was shaken, and he began to sink. If such would have continued, he would have been destroyed in the water.

Hosea 4:11 "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart."

"Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the understanding." (ASV)

This verse is a picture of gluttony and debauchery and the destruction which follows as they chased after their false gods.

"Wine and fleshly sin are pictured as blended in one, to deprive men of its affections and reason and understanding, and to leave him brutish and irrational" (Pusey, p. 51).

Sin of any kind will take away man's ability to reason as he immerses himself in it.

Why does the text mention "**wine and new wine**" in the same breath? It would seem that the first use must apply to that which causes intoxication (poisoning), because "**new wine**" obviously refers to newly-squeezed juice (simple grape juice). When one honestly observes the effects of intoxicating beverages, how can he defend the use of such in any amount? Yet, many elders and preachers will do just that. This text shows that immorality and alcohol destroy the soul!

Whatever desire one has, if it is unlawful, will take away his ability to think rationally. The Biblical heart is not only the seat of emotions, but it is also the home of the intellect. Sin will enslave one to the

point that it will override what he knows to be right in order to satisfy his desires. When one gives in to his desires (lusts), not only will he think irrationally, but he will look for excuses to ignore the truth.

Since intoxicating beverages are one of the things in view here, notice the comments about such beverages made by GOD through Isaiah.

"Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!...But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean" (28:1, 7-8).

Hosea 4:12 "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their GOD."

"My people ask counsel at their stock, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err, and they have played the harlot, departing from under their GOD." (ASV)

"My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them." In spite of all their unfaithfulness, GOD still refers to them as His people. This shows the love He had for them, but it was not a love that — no matter what they did — He would continue to accept them as His people. He was warning them throughout this letter to repent, or else He

would divorce them.

The term “**stocks**,” literally means “wood” and refers to the idols carved from wood. Imagine bowing in worship before and asking advice from a piece of wood which had to be carved by one’s own hands. How utterly ridiculous. The “**staff**” probably refers to a method whereby two sticks were held upright while incantations were uttered and then dropped. When the sticks fell, the way they fell determined the answer given to the worshipper.

When the people lost their understanding through whoredom and wine, they turned to their man-made gods.

“Their whoredoms were both physical and spiritual, with the physical kind feeding the spiritual and the spiritual encouraging the physical, in a continuing and ever-widening cycle of sin” (Graham, p. 123).

It should be remembered that most idol worship of that time demanded sexual immorality on the part of their devotees. As an example, in Babylon every woman had to be a prostitute once in her life and give the money to the temple. The groves and high places of the many gods of Hosea’s time were places of gross immorality by both men and women.

*“The wife was spoken of as **under her husband**, i.e., under his authority; she withdrew herself from under him, when she withdrew herself from his authority, and gave herself to another. So Israel, being wedded to God, estranged herself from Him, withdrew herself from His obedience, cast off all reverence for Him, and prostituted herself to her idols”* (Pusey, p. 52).

Hosea 4:13 “**They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is**

good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.”

“They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and terebinths, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters play the harlot, and your brides commit adultery.” (ASV)

SACRIFICE — *“This verb is used primarily to describe the killing of animals for sacrifices, even idolatrous sacrifices”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to slaughter, to kill, to offer, to sacrifice. The word is used in its broadest sense to indicate the slaughtering of various animals”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 281).

ELMS — elah — *“A feminine noun referring to an oak tree or terebinth tree. This was a mighty tree often connected to a cultic setting or activity”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 53).

WHOREDOM — zanah — *“To fornicate, commit fornication, be a harlot, play the harlot, commit adultery; to apostatize, have intercourse with false gods or foreigners; to seduce. The main idea is to commit illicit sexual intercourse, particularly with women. However, this strong image is used in a figurative sense to describe illegal contact between Israel and other nations and their gods. Only twice does it refer to men”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute. It is typically used for women and only twice in reference to men”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 297).

SPOUSES — kallah — *“A feminine noun referring to a bride, a daughter-in-law. In the biblical world, it refers to a woman under the authority of her father, then of her husband and father-in-law. It indicates specifically a young daughter-in-law; a young married woman, a bride”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 508).

Throughout the Scriptures and secular history, it is seen that the worship of idols often took place on elevated places. It seems, like the people at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11), that they felt this got them closer to their deities.

“Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols” (Ezekiel 6:13).

Before His people entered the land of Canaan, GOD had commanded His people to destroy all of the places of false worship.

“Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your GOD” (Deuteronomy 12:2-4).

Because of idolatry, the people of Canaan were cast out of the land and replaced with GOD’s people. Yet, the Israelites turned away from GOD to worship these same “deities.” No wonder GOD would send them into captivity and destroy their nation!

The text also reveals that they liked certain trees because the shadow (shade) was good under them. When men are involved in sin, they love darkness because they think their deeds are somehow hidden there.

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and

men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (John 3:19-20).

The people of Israel had become so wicked that they appear to have worshipped these gods in the daytime in the partial darkness of these places. One should remind himself that their idolatrous worship often included sexual immorality. This shows they were getting bolder in their sins. How could they even begin to think that they could hide their actions? The same way men today think they can hide their evil deeds — their religious adultery. They develop the idea that GOD really does not care as long as they are religious, searing their consciences (1 Timothy 4:2). But GOD does disapprove of their actions and sees all — nothing can be hidden from Him.

“Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee” (Psalm 139:7-12).

When noticing the word “**whoredoms**” (see definitions above), the idea evolves that they would become prostitutes for these idol gods. This was a very common practice for these gods, where temples were often stocked with primarily female,

but also male, prostitutes. The money given for their services was used to support the upkeep of the temples as well as provide for the attendants and priests at these places.

Notice who would engage in these things. The men who frequented these places are being told that their daughters and daughters-in-law (brides) would become these religious prostitutes. This stands to reason, because children often follow in the footsteps of their parents. When parents smoke, the odds are their children will do the same thing. When they drink alcoholic beverages, the odds are their children will do the same thing. When parents are immoral, their children tend to be the same way. How many times in society today is one told that child abusers were almost always abused as children themselves. In other words, they simply imitate the behavior of their authority figures. Israel was following the lead of her human authority figures

There is another idea put forth by some that this may be an allusion to their daughters being forced into this religious prostitution. This would be done by enemies who captured them and placed them in brothels. This has all too often taken place in the world. In the present day, one must ask himself how many young girls (and boys) have been kidnaped and made sex slaves in another country. The news media has done a number of stories on this kind of atrocity in recent years. Remember the earlier comment that in one era of Babylon's history, every woman had to offer herself as a prostitute once in her lifetime to support the gods she served (this had to be with someone other than her husband).

Hosea 4:14 "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with

harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall."

"I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go apart with harlots, and they sacrifice with the prostitutes; and the people that doth not understand shall be overthrown." (ASV)

At first glance, this passage seems to be saying that there will be no punishment for their sins. But a closer examination reveals the true thought. What does it mean if punishment is removed, i.e., if GOD stops punishing man in this life? Why is correction administered? And to whom is it administered?

There is a principle found in Hebrews 12:5ff which can help the understanding of this passage and answer the questions posed above.

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

What is the principle here? Is it not the fact that one can reach a point where no chastisement will change his behavior? When such a point is reached, no further attempt will be made; the person will be abandoned to his fate. Friend, if GOD abandons one, his fate is indeed sealed. Is not that the implication of the Lord's words when speaking of the Pharisees when He said, "**Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch**" (Matthew 15:14, emphasis mine, RK). To

be without chastisement is to be without son-ship, outside of the family relationship, and no one outside of the family of GOD will inherit eternal salvation. In this statement, GOD is saying He has abandoned the rebellious Israelites to their fate.

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:26-27).

“Because that, when they knew GOD, they glorified Him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore GOD also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves” (Romans 1:21-24, emphasis mine, RK).

“Therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.” They had forgotten their GOD. Because of their sins, they had removed themselves from knowledge of Him. This was willfully done; it was not an accident.

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's

crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider” (Isaiah 1:2-3).

Since they had willfully abandoned GOD, He would abandon them; they **“shall fall.”** Friend, what does this say about members of the Lord's church who once knew the truth but have abandoned it for the gimmicks of the denominational world, who like the Israelites turn to the sensual in their religion? Who feel that because they “enjoy” something that GOD will be pleased with their efforts?

Also seen in this passage is that all will be treated the same way. The women who engaged in these things would fall, but so also would the men who participated in them. The fathers had not fulfilled their obligation to teach true worship and morals to their families — now all would fall. GOD is not like the Pharisees who brought the woman caught in the very act of adultery, demanding her punishment, but had not brought the man. GOD punishes both equally for their sin (John 8:1ff).

Hosea 4:15 “Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth.”

“Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, nor swear, As Jehovah liveth.” (ASV)

Another charge is made against Israel, and a plea is put forth to Judah. Judah is warned not to trespass, not to sin, as has Israel. Do not follow her example.

The cities of Gilgal and Bethaven had once been places of honor, but now they were places of ill repute. They had become places of wholesale idolatry. Gilgal had been the site of the first worship for the Israelites in the promised land. Samuel worshipped there and anointed Saul to be

the first king there.

Bethaven literally means “*house of vanity*,” but it had once been called Bethel which means, “*house of GOD*.” It was here that Jeroboam set up a golden calf for Israel to worship so that they would not return to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple. Now Judah is warned by GOD not to have anything to do with these places. This passage is a prohibition against going to a place of false worship. Judah was **forbidden by GOD** to go to these places. Is there not a lesson to be learned from this today? Many today, and in all ages, say, “It will not hurt to visit this or that denomination or to go when they have some special event or program.” How many today compromise with phrases like, “*If I do not go with them, they will not come with me?*” Shame, SHAME, **SHAME!!!** How many parents in the Lord’s church have endangered their children’s souls by allowing them to attend denominational vacation Bible schools, thus planting the seed in their children’s minds that they are really OK? And then years down the road wondered why their children left the church. The answer is really quite apparent to those who honestly face reality.

These were places where GOD-fearing people should not “**swear, the Lord liveth**” — no testimony given of Him. They are places with a vile atmosphere, because of the immorality which attended idolatry; places where GODLY people should not have been. This is a lesson which should be observed today. Christians need to stay away from dens of iniquity and not deceive themselves into thinking they can change these places into wholesome establishments. An example of good in a bad place, but without benefit to the place, is Lot in Sodom. The fact that Lot was allowed to escape shows he was a just man (2 Peter 2:7). He did his part, and yet not one person in Sodom changed, but all were destroyed because of their wickedness. In

fact, he lost most of his family to Sodom’s wickedness. Many say they go to these places because they might be able to make a difference, but could it be that they want to be able to be at these places without verbally condoning what happens there — that they like these places and maybe even secretly wish they could join in.

“What agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? for ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

“I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

Hosea 4:16 **“For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.”**

“For Israel hath behaved himself stubbornly, like a stubborn heifer: now will Jehovah feed them as a lamb in a large place.” (ASV)

SLIDETH BACK — sarar — “*To turn away (morally), apostasize; to be refractory, be rebellious, revolt; to be stubborn; to withdraw. Hos. 4:16 presents the picture of Israel as being like an untamed cow, a stubborn animal shaking the yoke from its shoulders*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to be stubborn, to be rebellious*”

(Baker/Carpenter, p. 792).

The analogy here is striking, since the original object of the ten northern tribes' worship was the golden calf. Israel is compared to a heifer which, either trained or untrained, will back away when an attempt is made to put a yoke upon her. There are always those who want the association of GOD, but are not willing to shoulder the responsibilities which go with such an association. There are always those who declare their love for the Lord, but will not submit to the plan of action He has given, will not do the assigned work. Israel refused to submit to the yoke of GOD's law.

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

GOD attempts over and over, with infinite patience, to get His people to obey Him for their own welfare. But a time comes when He will simply say, "Enough is enough."

"They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as He cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate" (Zechariah 7:11-14).

They brought their troubles upon themselves.

"Every farmer knows how stubborn a heifer can be. When one does not

wish to be led, no amount of pulling, persuasion or prodding can move one. A stubborn, balking heifer will often times lie down on the ground to keep from being led. It will absolutely defy its owner to herd it anywhere. This graphically describes the stiff-necked Israel" (Butler, p. 480).

Because they would not submit to GOD's will, they will now be allowed to go their own way and be as **"lambs in a large place."** Lambs in a large place are those who have no security; they are vulnerable to attack from all their enemies. The opposite of this would be the lambs in the fold, secure and safe from attack, guarded by the shepherd. When lambs are left in a large place, they seldom survive, for they cannot protect themselves — they cannot even take care of their needs. Israel's time of punishment is at hand.

"Because Israel was like a stubborn calf, God no longer attempted to corral her, abandoning her as a lamb in a vast wilderness" (MacArthur, p. 975).

Hosea 4:17 "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."

"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." (ASV)

The term **"Ephraim"** is used to signify the whole northern nation, just as the southern nation was known after the tribe of Judah. The nation had joined itself to idols to such an extent that it was no longer possible to turn her from her course. Because she would not turn, she was to be abandoned to her fate. Yes, it is possible for someone, or a group, to become so evil that it is impossible to reclaim him. Speaking of the religious leaders of His day, Jesus said they had become the same way, and He gave His disciples the following command.

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

The writer of Hebrews (6:4-6) spoke of those in the Christian age who had become like the Israelites mentioned in this text.

“It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

Judah is being told not to try to help Ephraim when her punishment comes. If she did interfere, she could come to harm through the Assyrians. This reminds one of Josiah, who was warned by GOD not to interfere when Pharaohnechoh brought his armies against Assyria. Josiah did not listen to the Word of the Lord and died in battle (2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 35).

Hosea 4:18 “Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye.”

“Their drink is become sour; they play the harlot continually; her rulers dearly love shame.” (ASV)

SOUR — sur — “To turn off (literally or figuratively); to turn aside; to go away, recede, depart; to apostatize; forsake; to pass away; to cease; to turn to, to apply to, to approach, to alight; to pervert, to cause to turn away, to disappear; to put away, take

away, remove; to cause to turn to; to let something come to; to be taken away, carried away, removed. The primary meaning of this verb is ‘to turn aside’” (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to turn away, to go away, to desert, to quit, to keep far away, to stop, to take away, to remove, to be removed, to make depart”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 773).

RULERS — magen — “A masculine noun meaning shield. It indicates some kind of protection, literally or figuratively” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 568).

Their conduct is described first of all as **“Their drink is sour.”** If taken literally, that which is consumed of a sour nature would refer to that which is spoiled, causing sickness. Thus, it would refer to the sins which they had consumed and which had made them sick. In looking at the definitions above, their drink had turned them aside from GOD, i.e., they became apostates. Further, there is the idea that they knew these things would cause sickness (sickness of the soul) and bring their ruin — yet they would not stop. They continued their abominations though they knew the warnings GOD had given. JFB states that the phrase **“their drink is sour”** is a *“metaphor for utter degeneracy or principle”* (p. 473).

Not only do the people continue in these abominations, but so do their rulers. The term **“rulers”** literally means *“shield.”* This is interesting, because it shows the leadership position which is to be taken by rulers. Rulers are to be a shield, a device of protection, for the people over which they rule. If the rulers lead the way in abomination, the people will follow their example. As one studies through the prophets, it should be observed how often the prophets condemned the rulers because they should have been leading the people in righteousness and away from

unrighteousness. Here, Hosea condemns the rulers because they are not only involved in these sinful actions, but they love and chase after the very things which bring shame upon them.

“They love that which brings shame, which is bound up with shame, and ends in it... They act, as if they were in love with the shame” (Pusey, p. 54).

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause GOD shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

The rulers led people in wickedness because they loved wickedness.

“Like us, Hosea lived in a pornographic society in which those who should have been on the side of Biblical morality and simple decency supported permissiveness and upheld every form of moral and religious decadence” (Phillips, p. 50).

Hosea 4:19 “The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.”

“The wind hath wrapped her up in its wings; and they shall be put to shame because of their sacrifices.” (ASV)

BOUND HER UP — sarar — *“A verb meaning to bind up, to tie up, to be distressed, to be troubled, to be oppressed, to be cramped. It refers to something being bound up, tied up physically...It is used figuratively of one’s life (soul) being bound in a bag”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 970).

ASHAMED — bos — *“To be ashamed, to feel ashamed, to be confounded, to be disappointed, to make ashamed, to keep waiting, to deceive, to act shamefully; to disgrace. This is a root meaning ‘to become pale’ or ‘to blush.’ When failure or sin occurs, there is a disconcerting feeling, a flushing of the face. The word often occurs in contexts of humiliation and shattered human emotions. It is the feeling of public disgrace. BoMsh is the confusion, embarrassment, or dismay when things do not turn out as expected”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to be ashamed, to act shamefully, or to put to shame. It is both an external and a subjective experience, ranging from disgrace to guilt...Moreover, to act shamefully is equivalent to acting unwisely (Prov. 10:5; 14:35)”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 124).

“Destruction must come; and when it comes it will be as a tornado, wrapping the nation up in its wings and carrying the people away” (Hailey, p. 151).

This wind is a strong one of divine wrath where the destruction will be swift. They will be bound up, shut up with no way to escape. The imagery of Baker/Carpenter is striking when they say figuratively like a life/soul bound in a bag. There is no escape for Israel. They had been given opportunities to escape this wrath, but they had refused to avail themselves of them — now there is no hope. Further, once the people realized what they had done, i.e., that their evil sacrifices had not helped them, they would be ashamed. In her

captivity, Israel would learn to be ashamed of the idols she once served and the way they served them. Later, Judah would have to learn the same lesson in Babylon and never again served idols.

Hosea Chapter Five

Hosea 5:1 “Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.”

“Hear this, O ye priests, and hearken, O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king; for unto you pertaineth the judgment; for ye have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.”
(ASV)

HEARKEN — qasab — “*To prick up (the ears, i.e., sharpening them like an alert animal); to listen, give heed, pay attention; attend to something; make attentive*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to listen carefully, to pay attention, to give heed, to obey. The basic significance of the term is to denote the activity of paying close attention to something, usually another person’s words or sometimes to something that can be seen*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1018).

JUDGMENT — mispat — “*Properly, a verdict (whether favorable or unfavorable) which was pronounced judicially, a judgment, a sentence, a formal decree; justice, right, privilege; place of judgment; cause, suit; crime, guilt; law, rule, ordinance, custom, manner; what is due. This is an extremely important word for the proper understanding of all government (human or divine). Unlike our modern democratic tripartite conception (legislative, executive, and judicial), the verbal root, shaMphatR (8199), from which this noun originates, refers to all functions of government, not merely the judicial*

process. The concept of “justice” inculcates the full range of meaning in English” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning a judgment, a legal decision, a legal case, a claim, proper, rectitude. The word connotes several variations in meanings depending on the context. It is used to describe a legal decision or judgment rendered: it describes a legal decision given by God to be followed by the people” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 688).

SNARE — pah — “It means a snare, a trap—net, a net; to lay snares, i.e., to plot, to devise a trap for someone; anything which causes someone to fall; danger, calamity, destruction” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine singular noun translated bird trap...more often it is used figuratively for a human ensnarement” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 894).

It appears that three classes of people are under consideration here: (1) The priests, (2) Israel (the common people), and (3) the king (ruling class). Though three classes are mentioned, it cannot be denied that in this section primary consideration is given to two of those classes — the priests and king. Note the repetition with regard to a plea for them to listen to the warnings given throughout this book, but also to listen to the judgments which are being declared.

Why this primary concern with the priests and the king's house? The priests had an obligation to teach GOD's laws to the people.

“That ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses” (Leviticus 10:10-11).

“The priest's lips should keep

knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 2:7).

They had not fulfilled that responsibility, having instead led the people into idolatry, or (at the very least) kept silent in these matters. The kings had the responsibility to enforce the laws handed to them by GOD in His Word. Neither were doing their jobs. Thus, GOD had already examined them (legal proceeding) and was now issuing his verdict (judgment) upon them.

Instead of teaching and enforcing GOD's laws, what had the priests and king done? They had set traps (“**ensnared**” and “**net spread**”) which would capture the people and cause their destruction. The imagery is that of traps which were set to capture birds unawares. The people were not accidentally captured but skillfully maneuvered into a situation where they would be ensnared. Remember, the ten tribes were initially led to the golden calves by a king who was seeking some way to keep the people from going back to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Why are Mizpah and Tabor singled out here? Mizpah means “A watchtower” (JFB, p. 474), and Tabor means “A lofty place” (IBID). It seems pretty obvious from the text that these were places chosen to be a snare to the Israelites. The Jews have an interesting tradition here as recorded by Pusey.

“There is an old Jewish tradition, that lyers-in-wait were set in these two places, to intercept and murder those Israelites, who would go up to worship at Jerusalem. And this tradition gains countenance from the mention of slaughter in the next verse” (p. 56).

A lesson should be drawn from this for today. Israel was supposed to be GOD's kingdom. The priests were to teach His

law, and the king should enforce it. Today, the church is GOD's kingdom, and like the physical kingdom, it has those in place as leaders who have basically the same roles as those of the physical kingdom — elders and preachers. Preachers have the primary role of proclaiming GOD's will to mankind and especially to the church. Elders have the primary obligation to enforce GOD's will. In many places today, the elders and preacher are acting just like the priests and kings of Israel. Instead of leading the congregation to respect and obey GOD's laws, they lead them to the false gods of denominationalism (entertainment, addition and subtraction from GOD's Word in both worship and morality, et cetera). GOD's verdict for such is just as sure as it was for Israel of old. **Preachers — preach the Word! Elders — enforce the Word!**

Hosea 5:2 **“And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.”**

“And the revolvers are gone deep in making slaughter; but I am a rebuker of them all.”
(ASV)

SLAUGHTER — sahat — “*To slaughter in sacrifice or by massacre...to sacrifice human victims*”(Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to slaughter, to kill, to offer, to shoot out, to slay*”(Baker/Carpenter, p. 1120).

REBUKER — musar — “*Chastisement, punishment, correction, discipline, instruction, self-control...Essentially, it is a bond, a checking, restraint, i.e., correction which results in education*”(Zodhiates, CD); “*A masculine noun meaning instruction, discipline*”(Baker/Carpenter, p. 582).

The priests and kings' houses are called revolvers because they are in rebellion to GOD (revolvers resist authority). They practiced what they wanted to regardless of the laws GOD had given them through Moses and the prophets.

Because they were revolvers, what did they do? They slaughtered, but not simply slaughtered. As the NKJV clearly shows, they were “*deeply involved in slaughter.*” This seems to indicate the great lengths to which they would go in order to have their own way. What did they slaughter? As definitions above show, this word means to “slaughter” or “massacre.” There are several possibilities here. This could be speaking of the spiritual slaughter they were involved in with the people — they were slaughtering their souls. The other idea seems to fit the context better, i.e., they murdered anyone who stood in their way. In chapter four, verse two, murder is pointed out as one of the sins in which Israel was involved. Later in this book (6:9), the priests are explicitly accused of murder. Why did they murder? To keep their idolatrous worship and protect it against all attacks. A good illustration of this is found in First Kings 16:31. It is seen that Jezebel introduced Baal worship into Israel, and then in First Kings 18 she is shown to have tried to murder all of GOD's prophets.

These revolvers had not been without warning, for GOD says He had “**been a rebuker of them all.**” Israel had immersed herself in sin, while at the same time being rebuked by GOD in both words and the deeds of His true servants. Yet, the people, priests and rulers continued to resist GOD's authority. Did they not remember the terrible consequences of David's sin with Bathsheba or his numbering of the people? Or did they simply ignore those examples as many do in any generation? Thus, GOD would bring rebuke and punishment upon them because of His great love for them. GOD never punishes arbitrarily, but always out of love.

“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither

be weary of His correction: For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:11-12).

If GOD did not care about man’s eternal welfare, He would simply let man do whatever he wanted. But that is not the GOD of Heaven.

“A fool despiseth his father’s instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent” (Proverbs 15:5).

Hosea 5:3 **“I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from Me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.”**

“I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from Me; for now, O Ephraim, thou hast played the harlot, Israel is defiled.” (ASV)

Ephraim was the leading tribe of the northern kingdom, and Samaria was the capital. The capital led the way in this idolatry, promoting it. Apparently, from this text, the people seemed to think they could hide all of the atrocities they had committed. But no matter how their fellow man might be blinded to their actions, nothing can be hidden from the eyes of GOD. Ultimately, man must answer to this all-seeing eye.

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13).

“Ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23)

Ephraim, the capital and leading influence in the nation, was filled with sin. Thus, the nation followed its lead. When the capital of a nation seeks evil instead of good, fills itself full of deceit instead of truth, and robs its people, the nation will gradually follow in

its steps. This is true of any nation. One cannot help but wonder how far the evil influences which control Washington, DC will go before America becomes totally corrupt.

GOD very strongly tells Israel, “I KNOW, and nothing is hidden from Me.” He knows every detail of the whoredoms committed by Ephraim and Israel. He points out that their whoredoms have **“defiled,”** have corrupted them.

Hosea 5:4 **“They will not frame their doings to turn unto their GOD: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.”**

“Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto their GOD; for the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not Jehovah.” (ASV)

FRAME — nathan — *“To give, place, add, send forth. Though the verb has a wide variety of applications, its root meaning pertains to giving”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to give, to place”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 761).

TURN — sub — *“To turn back, turn oneself, turn around, return, come back; to turn around (figuratively); to turn to Jehovah”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1108).

MIDST — qereb — *“It means the nearest part, the center; the interior of a thing”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A masculine noun meaning midst, middle, interior, inner part, inner organs, bowels, inner being. The term occurs 222 times in the Old Testament and denotes the center or inner part of anything”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1011).

KNOWN — yada — “To perceive, understand, acquire knowledge, know, discern; be acquainted with a woman (in a sexual way, i.e., sexual intercourse); be known, make oneself known, cause to know; to be familiar; to be aware of; to appear; to inform; to announce; to reveal oneself; to appoint; to order” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to know, to learn, to perceive, to discern, to experience, to confess, to consider, to know people relationally, to know how, to be skillful, to be made known, to make oneself known to make to know” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 420).

“They will not frame their doings.”

The word frame comes from a primitive word which means “to give.” This indicates that they would not give up their own selfish desires in order to please GOD. They refused to change their idolatrous habits, but purposely chose to continue in them. They had seared their hearts, much like Pharaoh had done, to the point of no return.

The reason they would not return to GOD, first of all, is that they had allowed the “**spirit of whoredoms**” to consume their thinking and actions. They allowed their unfaithfulness to GOD to become a habit, a habit which they enjoyed and would not give up. This is very similar to those caught up in an adulterous marriage. Very seldom when two people find out they are living in adultery will they give it up, preferring the pleasures of their mates instead of those offered by GOD (salvation). Habits which involve sensual aspects of life are very hard to give up, but must be given up in order to please GOD. They had become slaves to sin and wanted to remain slaves to sin.

“The sense is, they are incurable, for they will not permit their doings to be framed so as to turn to God” (JFB, p. 475).

Second, they would not turn away from their sensual appetites because they no longer knew GOD. Remember Hosea 4:6.

As they turned away from GOD, they gradually lost more and more of their knowledge of Him. They were no longer teaching and being taught the pure Word of GOD. Why was this true? Because they did not want to know GOD nor His will for them.

“For the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them; for GOD hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew GOD, they glorified Him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:18-22).

In reading about Israel being overcome by “**the spirit of whoredoms**” which would lead to their destruction, this writer could not help but remember the incident in Matthew chapter eight. There is found the account of Jesus healing a man controlled by demons. The demons requested that if they were to be cast out, they be allowed to enter a herd of swine nearby. When they entered the swine, they ran down the hill into the sea; thus the swine were destroyed. When one becomes a slave to sin, the end is just as sure as that which happened to the swine.

Hosea 5:5 “**And the pride of Israel doth**

testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.”

“And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity; Judah also shall stumble with them.” (ASV)

PRIDE — gaon — “A masculine noun designating pride, majesty, arrogance, excellence” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 175).

FALL — kasal — “To totter, stumble, stagger; to faint; to fall; to become weak; to cause to fall; to seduce, lead astray; to be overthrown; to be felled” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to stumble, to stagger, to totter, to cause to stumble, to overthrow, to make weak. This word is used literally of individuals falling or figuratively of cities and nations falling” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 529).

“And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face.” Throughout all of their history, pride was one of the major problems of the Israelites. Now this pride was going to testify against them.

“The sin which, which through pride of mind, lurked in secret, bore open witness through the sin of the flesh” (Pusey, p. 58).

They took pride in themselves and not in their GOD, preferring their idols to GOD. When a person becomes “puffed up” and “proud,” he lifts himself up for a great fall. Their pride rose as a testimonial before them to the very face of GOD.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).

“Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity.” Their adultery and rebellion were open and quite arrogantly displayed before GOD. Now their sin was going to confront them face to face, and they would totter, stumble and fall in their iniquity. Some feel Israel and Ephraim are

synonyms for the same people. Others believe Israel stands for the ten tribes, whereas Ephraim represents the chief of the ten tribes, the “royal tribe” which led them in their apostasy. No matter which meaning is the accurate one, the result would be the same: they **“fall in their iniquity.”**

“Judah also shall fall with them.” History shows Judah indeed fell, not at the same time, but for the same reason Israel fell. The words **“fall with them”** indicate that Judah fell because of the same iniquity which toppled Israel. Judah followed her sister into idolatry and then into captivity. It is interesting that Hosea is primarily dedicated to announcing the destruction of Israel. Yet, eleven times in this book a brief mention is made of the coming destruction of her sister — Judah (5:5, 10, 12, 13, 14; 6:4, 11; 8:14; 10:11; 11:12; 12:2). Notice that five of the eleven references to of Judah’s destruction are in this chapter.

One of the things one should be reminded of by Judah’s being mentioned here is that GOD is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Yes, Judah would be the tribe from which the Messiah would come. But that fact did not spare her from destruction (captivity) because of her idolatry, adultery, and rebellion to GOD. GOD renders to every man and nation that which they brings upon themselves, whether it be righteousness or unrighteousness. When a nation haughtily rises up against GOD, promoting those things which GOD despises and has legislated against, and does everything it can to remove GOD from its national existence, that nation will fall. Modern history shows this to be true in the fall of the godless Soviet Union. Yet, America continues to remove every mention of GOD in the public arena through godless organizations like the ACLU, a president

who cancels the national day of prayer, et cetera. America steadily moves forward in eliminating prayer from the school systems and the word "GOD" from its vocabulary (except for a constant use of it in a profane way). All the while America grows more arrogant with its gods of immorality, popularity, sports, education, et cetera. America is on the same road to destruction as was ancient Israel.

Hosea 5:6 **"They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find Him; He hath withdrawn Himself from them."**

"They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek Jehovah; but they shall not find Him: He hath withdrawn Himself from them." (ASV)

There are several thoughts to be considered regarding their flocks. When Israel was to leave Egyptian bondage, they were to take their herds and flocks with them. These were not only a source of food and clothing; they were also the source of the sacrifices GOD demanded of them. Now they were going to seek GOD with their flocks and herds, which seemingly indicates a willingness to offer the prescribed sacrifices, but they were not going to be able to find Him. Why?

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:13).

They seem to be like men of all ages, who think they can flaunt their sins in GOD's face and then at the last possible moment turn to Him and be accepted. This is not repentance based on love (Judas is a good example), rather it is simply trying to avoid a calamity. At the end of the kingdom, no

doubt many saw the results of their folly coming upon them and tried to turn to GOD, but it was too late. How many today hardly think of GOD until some calamity strikes them, and then the first thing they do is call upon GOD to save them? That was probably the case with the people of Noah's day when the rains began to fall.

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

It is also possible that their actions were simply a "show" of turning back, a pretense, a pretending to turn back to GOD. Maybe they thought they could fool GOD into believing they had turned from their sins to Him. Note for example the days of Josiah. Josiah **"turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses"** (2 Kings 23:25). Josiah destroyed the idolatry being practiced in Judah, reinstating the true worship of GOD. Yet, after his death it appears the people could hardly wait for his body to grow cold before they turned back to their idols. Why? Could it be they only served GOD during this time because Josiah had the power, and was willing to use it, to make them serve GOD — but their hearts were not really in it? Or, could it be they served GOD under Josiah because it was the popular (politically correct) thing to do?

The calamity was coming, and it was too late to search for GOD; He had left them to their deserved punishment. Too

many have reasoned over the years that they have plenty of time. They believe they can behave any way they want, and in the final days of their lives turn back to GOD. They need to study the book of Hosea to learn they can go too far, and when they do so, there is no turning back to GOD.

“For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Hosea 5:7 “They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.”

“They have dealt treacherously against Jehovah; for they have borne strange children: now shall the new moon devour them with their fields.” (ASV)

TREACHEROUSLY — bagad — “To act covertly or fraudulently, secretly, deceptively; to cheat, betray; to oppress, to afflict, to spoil” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to deal treacherously with, to be traitorous, to act unfaithfully, to betray” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 117).

“The word is used of treachery of a friend towards his friend, of the husband of his wife, or the wife to her husband” (Pusey, p. 59).

“Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:20).

Israel bore “**strange children.**” The word “**strange**” means “*outside*” and could have several meanings here. It could mean that, because of their unfaithfulness they were having children of mixed blood (Jewish and Gentile), which was forbidden by GOD’s law. It could also mean their unfaithfulness

to GOD was breeding a whole generation who did not know GOD and were therefore strangers to GOD and His covenant. Each generation which grows up without the influences of GOD’s teaching goes farther and farther away from Him. The NKJV appears to be a good translation of this phrase when it says “*they have begotten pagan children.*” Unfortunately, many in the Lord’s church have done the same thing through a failure to teach their children GOD’s Word.

Most commentators believe the word “**moon**” refers to the “*new moon,*” which would signify “*the sacrifices to their gods at the time of the new moon would bring full and complete destruction and not deliverance*” (Hailey, p. 153). If it simply means a month, then it is probably speaking of the rapidity with which their destruction and fall would come.

“*The iniquity was full; harvest was ripe; now, suddenly, rapidly, completely, the end should come*” (Pusey, p. 59).

“*The moon is never still; it is ever moving on its ordained path and we can do nothing to stop it. The moon waxes and wanes, and darkness comes. Likewise Israel’s doom was coming*” (Phillips, p. 51).

Hosea 5:8 “Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin.”

“Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: sound an alarm at Beth-aven; behind thee, O Benjamin.” (ASV)

The “**cornet**” was an instrument made from a ram’s horn, while the trumpet was made from brass or silver. Both were used as instruments of warning when the enemy approached, with the trumpet sometimes being used in the worship of GOD.

Of the cities mentioned here, Gibeah was the home of Samuel and where Saul was anointed as king. Gibeah and Ramah were both cities on the northern border of Benjamin, which seems to indicate the complete destruction of Israel. When this destruction took place, the enemy would be on the very border of Benjamin, threatening to invade it. It seems this is a warning to Judah, of which Benjamin was a part, i.e., “What happened to Israel can happen to you. Watchman — sound the alarm.” Bethaven is significant because it was previously known as Bethel (house of GOD), but was now a “house of vanity,” and it too was taken away captive. All three of these places were on hilltops, which would allow them to see the enemy coming and sound the alarm.

Hosea 5:9 “Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.”

“Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.” (ASV)

DESOLATE — sammah — *“It means waste, ruin; astonishment, consternation; horror; desolation. It emphasizes the spectacle of the desolation and the reaction which that causes”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine singular noun meaning ruin, astonishment. The primary meaning is that of ruin and wasting...A second meaning of astonishment, dismay, and horror is not clearly related to the primary meaning, but is used to describe feelings toward Israel and its cities in their times of disobedience”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1159).

SHALL SURELY BE — aman — *“In a transitive sense to make firm, to confirm, to support; in an intransitive sense to be firm, to stand firm; to be enduring; to trust, to*

believe” (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to be firm, to build up, to support, to nurture, or to establish. The primary meaning is that of providing stability and confidence, like a baby would find in the arms of a parent”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 69).

The day of rebuke which is fast approaching Ephraim is not going to be a “hand spanking;” it is going to be a complete destruction because of wickedness. In fact, Ephraim would not be rebuked for a short time and returned to her former state; she would **never return**. Israel never returned from her captivity as did Judah from Babylon (as a nation).

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

“The testimony of the LORD is sure” (Psalm 19:7).

GOD had promised the people He would protect them from their enemies if they would be faithful to Him. He also promised that He would allow their enemies to overcome them if they were unfaithful (Exodus 23). GOD sent the prophets time after time to warn the people of Israel, but they would not listen. Now the promised destruction would surely come. Jeremiah would later give Judah a similar prediction.

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven

them: Because they have not hearkened to My words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD” (29:17-19).

Jesus also spoke of the refusal of the people to listen to GOD’s Word and repent, and He declared their punishment.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38).

It should be considered that GOD has always been fair and merciful to His creation. How so? He has always given adequate and abundant warning of what He will do to those who refuse to obey Him. When the destruction comes, it will be man’s own fault that he suffers.

Consider also that since **“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD” (Romans 10:17)**, they could be assured of this coming punishment. They had GOD’s Word, which revealed that every threat and promise He had made in the past had come to pass. Therefore, what He promised now would come to pass.

Hosea 5:10 “The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out My wrath upon them like water.”

“The princes of Judah are like them that remove the landmark: I will pour out My wrath upon them like water.” (ASV)

REMOVE — nasag — “A verb meaning to move away, to be turned. It means to

change something from what it was, possibly by moving it: a boundary, a boundary marker; any object. It is used figuratively of being turned away from God, justice; changing God’s standards” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 736).

A warning of coming chastisement is now directed specifically toward Judah. The “boundary” or “landmark” was not to be moved from one place to another.

“Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour’s landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy GOD giveth thee to possess it” (Deuteronomy 19:14).

“Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour’s landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen” (Deuteronomy 27:17).

These landmarks were placed to show the property lines of families, and the people were not supposed to allow greed to change these boundaries. Moving a landmark was stealing what did not belong to one. The princes, the leaders, were guilty of a similar type sin. They had moved the boundary line of sin, the line between what was right and wrong. They had moved the boundary GOD had set against idolatry and other sins which He abhors.

Because they had moved the boundary lines, GOD would pour out His wrath upon them. This conjures the picture of a great dam which holds back a vast body of water, but it has a crack in it. As the pressure builds behind the wall, the crack widens, and suddenly the dam bursts. The resulting flood waters bring death and destruction in the valley below. So was GOD’s wrath to be poured out upon Judah for removing the boundary lines between sin and righteousness. They were guilty of calling good evil and evil good.

Consider this passage in light of the church, GOD's kingdom today. GOD has set boundaries for it in His Word in matters of worship and life in general. Man has no right to move those lines. Yet, many within the church are moving (or striving to move) those boundaries. This is done by allowing things to be done which GOD did not command. Women in some places are being allowed to assume leadership roles on an increasing level. Immorality is allowed to exist within congregations which refuse to discipline ungodliness (especially is this seen in the area of marriage-divorce-remarriage). GOD said "go" and convert, and yet many elders never try to convert anyone and really do not expect any member of the church to do so — except the preacher. Some in the church declare that the kind of music used in worship is optional. Some are advocating that baptism is not necessary and are accepting denominational people without proper baptism. This list could be greatly expanded. When those in the church move the boundary lines which GOD has set, do they really believe His wrath will not be poured out upon them as it was for Israel and later Judah?

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, GOD shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not GOD" (2 John 9).

Hosea 5:11 "Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment."

"Ephraim is oppressed, he is crushed in judgment; because he was content to walk after man's command." (ASV)

WILLINGLY — yaal — "To be willing, show willingness; to be determined; to undertake; to begin, make a beginning, venture; to be pleased, be content. It is making up one's mind to commence a given activity" (Zodhiates, CD); "A verb meaning to choose to do something. The focus of this verb is on the decision to act...This verb provides strong support for the theological concept of human free will because humanity is permitted to decide to act a certain way. God, however, will hold humanity responsible for those decisions and actions" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 411).

Why were the people of Ephraim oppressed and broken (literally "crushed")? Because they **"walked after the commandment."** What commandment? The commandment they willingly walked after could not be GOD's commandment! If they had willingly followed the command of GOD, they would not have found themselves in these dire straits. GOD will not punish anyone for following His commands. Punishment only comes from disobedience to His commands. Most scholars believe the command spoken of here is the one given by Jeroboam in First Kings 12:28.

"The king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

In verse thirty of that chapter, one is told the people obeyed his command.

"And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before

the one, even unto Dan.”

Because Jeroboam led the people into idolatry, he is known as he **“who made Israel to sin.”** The idea of this passage seems to be that Ephraim is following the dictates of human beings. Note above that Jeroboam did not simply come up with this idea himself, but after *“taking counsel”* made these idols and commanded the people to worship them. Note the rendering of this passage in the ASV and NKJV. *“He was content to walk after man’s command”* (ASV). *“He willingly walked by human precept”* (NKJV).

This passage also points out the free moral agency of man. Notice the words **“because he willingly walked”** (Emphasis mine, RK). They sinned in obeying this command, not because they were forced to do it, but because they wanted to turn from GOD’s commands. Whenever man sins, he is either deceived into sinning (Eve), or as is most often the case, he does it because he volunteers his services to do Satan’s will. Satan has never been able to force man to do his bidding.

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

Hosea 5:12 **“Therefore will I be unto**

Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.”

“Therefore am I unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.” (ASV)

Both the **“moth”** and **“rottenness”** are slow workers of destruction, but the end result of their work is total collapse. Consider that the moth is a particularly fragile insect, yet it can be extremely destructive. Further, the devastating nature of moths and rottenness is not seen at first without very careful observation; yet again, both are very destructive.

“Unseen and unheard, a moth in a garment eats away at the fabric and destroys it. Likewise rottenness secretly eats away at wood, but more slowly. Israel’s doom was coming swiftly; Judah’s, more slowly” (Phillips, p. 51).

This is the way sin tends to gain control of anyone. It starts out as a slow decay in the soul which is seldom recognized, and grows larger and larger until it controls one. It could be likened to tooth decay. When a cavity begins it is very small, but if untreated it grows ever larger. But while it is growing there is no pain or evidence that it is destroying the tooth. Finally, the decay reaches a point where the nerves cry out in pain. This is why the Spirit, through Paul, warns one to **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves”** (2 Corinthians 13:5). Without careful examination, sin will gradually destroy one’s soul. Israel and Judah’s sins would eat away at them until they were too weak to stand before their enemies and thus be carried into captivity.

Consider the picture of GOD’s providence here. He could have instantly destroyed those rebellious people. Instead, as absolute sovereign, He set in motion the rising of empires (Assyria and Babylon), which He would use to chastise

His people. This would allow them time to repent, and if not, then their destruction.

Hosea 5:13 “When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.”

“When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you, neither will he cure you of your wound.” (ASV)

Ephraim and Judah saw the trouble they were in, the weakening of the individual nations. They knew they were in trouble. But to whom did they turn in these moments of crisis? It was not to the One to whom they should have turned.

“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD”
(Jeremiah 17:5).

Instead, they made alliances with the nations around them which they deemed powerful enough to help them. Alliances are made by nations for protection, but when a nation turns against GOD and He determines its fall, no number of nations can protect it from His wrath. Further, if all of the nations in the world combined their forces to defeat one nation, that one lone nation would defeat all of them if it were righteous (on GOD’s side), i.e., relied upon GOD for protection.

Much ado has been made over who or what “**Jareb**” represents. The truth is that no one knows with any certainty. Further, it does not matter. Whoever or whatever it represents, it was someone or something other than GOD, and therein is the problem. What is known is that the name has something to do with Assyria. Both Israel (2 Kings 15:19-20) and Judah (2 Kings 16:5-9) at one time or another turned to Assyria for

help. Assyria pretended to be interested in helping them, but honestly was intent on spreading its own borders through conquering all the nations around it. This included both Israel and Judah. Assyria would be the nation which finally conquered Israel and brought it to its final end. Assyria would also wound, i.e., weaken Judah through the attacks it brought against it.

“No matter what conditions may be encroaching against their nations, no matter what debaucheries, violence, drunkenness and immoralities rot their society, wreck their economy, and disrupt their existence, they never think of returning to God; but instead, conceitedly suppose that they are fully able to get out of their predicament through the exercise of their own ingenuity or by imposing their own ridiculous remedies”
(Coffman, p. 104).

Question: do not the words of Coffman sound very much like America today? With all of the problems facing America today, notice how the proposed remedies all depend on man for an answer. All the problems of war, immorality, economic collapse, et cetera, would all disappear if man would surrender himself to GOD and turn to His Word for guidance. America — please wake up before it is too late.

But consider this also with regard to the Lord’s church. More and more congregations are seen to turn to the nations around them (denominations) for the answers to supposed growth, strength and spirituality. These “nations” do not have the answers. These “nations” only offer false hope and false comfort which lead to destruction. Instead of adopting the methods of these “nations,” the need is to turn back to doing things GOD’s way.

Hosea 5:14 “For I will be unto Ephraim

as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.”

“For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver.” (ASV)

Verse twelve showed the destruction of Israel and Judah in its beginning stages as something slow but sure (moth/rottenness). Now the terms used are intensified as a lion who powerfully and quickly sets upon its prey. The difference in the lions would be the stage of development, the young lion not being able to handle what the older more experienced lion could handle. Yet, even a young lion could cause substantial damage to an intended victim. The time of Israel’s punishment was near at hand, whereas the destruction of Judah was still developing. The first lion would be Assyria, a full-grown nation capable of destroying Israel. The young lion would be Babylon, which was beginning its development as the powerful nation which would take Judah.

The lion stalks its prey, brings it down, tearing the life from it, and then carries it away. This is the picture of what GOD would do to both nations, and no one can stop Him. Be it emphasized, Assyria and Babylon were not the enemies Israel and Judah needed to fear. GOD is orchestrating these events; it is GOD who formerly was their protector and benefactor whom they have made their enemy. There is no escape from the jaws of this enemy.

“Now consider this, ye that forget GOD, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver” (Psalm 50:22).

Hosea 5:15 **“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 go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me earnestly.” (ASV)

Continuing the imagery of the lion, once it has taken its prey, it returns to a place of seclusion — its den. GOD was departing from them, taking all signs of His presence from them, removing His mercy from them. It is time for their punishment. This will hopefully cause them to acknowledge their sin and enable them to seek GOD as they had in the past. Looking ahead, Israel refused to turn back; Judah on the other hand, did turn back in humble penitence.

The whole purpose of discipline in religion is for the purpose of reclaiming the sinner to a path of righteousness. The same is true today in the church. Note an example of this in First Timothy 1:18-20.

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

The afflictions of captivity will hopefully cause them to turn back to GOD.

Observance of this passage shows that two things are necessary on the part of the Israelites (the sinners) before GOD will pardon them. First, they have to admit their sins. Second, they must ask for forgiveness from the only source which can issue pardon (“**seek my face**”). It is not enough to admit wrongdoing — sin. Judas is a good example of this. He acknowledged his sin — “**I have betrayed the innocent blood**” (Matthew 27:4), but he did not ask for GOD’s forgiveness,

GOD's mercy. If he had, he would not have hung himself (self-murder), but instead would have brought forth fruit fit for repentance (Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20). His lack of forgiveness was foreshadowed by the Lord Himself, not because he could not be forgiven but because he did not meet the conditions set for forgiveness.

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born”
(Matthew 26:24).

Hosea Chapter Six

Hosea 6:1 “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.”

“Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath

smitten, and He will bind us up.” (ASV)

The only reason for the children of Israel to say, “**let us return unto the Lord,**” would be an understanding that they had transgressed GOD’s law. Such a call would also be from an understanding of the necessity of returning so that they might gain forgiveness. When this happened, there would be the understanding that it is only GOD who can help them — not Assyria or any other entity.

GOD is not one Who simply destroys, but One who forgives. Once forgiven, blessings will be reinstated which had formerly been enjoyed. Bear in mind that this context is pointing to a future time, specifically to the time of the Messiah.

This passage also implies a recognition that the punishments received were just. These are statements of people who are not trying to blame someone else for their predicament — they know who is at fault.

Another thought should be considered here. Are these the words of the prophet in a plea to get the people to return to GOD so they could be blest?

Hosea 6:2 “After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.”

“After two days will He revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him.” (ASV)

REVIVE — hayah — “To live, exist, enjoy life; to live anew; to recover; to be well; to make alive, enliven, animate, quicken; to preserve; to refresh; to rebuild. The first few chapters of Gen. clearly establish that life comes from a right relationship with God” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to be alive, to live, to keep alive” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 332).

Some believe this passage shows that the Israelites believed the displeasure of GOD toward them would be brief and their

return to His favor would be quick. But in keeping with the theme of a coming Messiah and the Christian age (as has already been seen), this writer must view this as a prophecy of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. If correct in this assessment, then one has the only record in the Old Testament which shows His three days in the tomb (Cf. Matthew 27:63; Mark 8:31; Luke 24:46-47; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2, 46-47; Colossians 3:1-2; 2:11-12; Ephesians 2:4-6; 1 Peter 3:21).

“The original, yekimenu, has been translated, he will raise him up. Then they who trusted in him could believe that they should be quicken together with him” (Clarke, p. 635).

To “**live in His sight**” does not refer to the fact that GOD sees all, though He does. It refers to living in His favor, i.e., with his favor.

Hosea 6:3 “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”

“And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: His going forth is sure as the morning; and He will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth.” (ASV)

FOLLOW ON — radap — “A verb meaning to pursue, to chase, to persecute” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1037).

PREPARED — kun — “To stand firm, be established, be firm, be steadfast, be faithful, be sure, be reliable, be fixed, be certain; to be ready, be prepared; to be determined; to set up, build, make ready; to direct; to be formed; to aim; to attend to; to be set in order; to make oneself ready. The main idea is to bring something into an incontrovertible existence” (Zodhiates, CD);

“A verb meaning to set up, to make firm, to establish, to prepare. The primary action of this verb is to cause to stand in an upright position, and thus the word also means fixed or steadfast” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 499).

“Two things are certain: since they were destroyed for lack of knowledge (4:6), if the people would now sincerely ‘follow on to know’ Him (v. 3), He would surely return to bless them. On the other hand, if they took a smug attitude toward themselves and God’s willingness to return to them, He would not now be deceived but would see through their hypocrisy as He had in the past” (Hailey, p. 156).

If they would faithfully follow after the knowledge of GOD (“**follow on to know**”), then their blessings would be as sure as the rising of the sun. The children of Israel knew from GOD’s past dealings with them that, if they would “**follow on to know the Lord,**” then He would bless them. This is the import of the former and latter rains which nourished the earth and provided blessings for them. The regularity of these rains was a sign from GOD of His favor upon them as recorded in Deuteronomy 11:13-17.

“It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your GOD, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods,

and worship them; And then the LORD’S wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.”

The formula is simple — faithfully serve GOD, and He will bless you; refuse to serve GOD, and feel His wrath.

The rain, latter and former, was an extremely important factor in raising crops in Palestine. The early rains came in autumn (October) at the time the earth was prepared for the crops. The latter rain came in the spring (March and April) in preparation for the crops to be harvested — allowing the grain to fill out. If either rain was withheld, the harvest would fail.

The idea of “**follow on**” is one of very earnest effort to obtain something. They could not give a half-hearted effort. That would necessitate not simply learning something, but holding on to what was learned and applying it in a practical way to one’s life. Further, this “**following on**” cannot be a one-time action, or for a limited duration of time, but rather a continuing one — a life-long effort.

Hosea 6:4 “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.”

“O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away.” (ASV)

Imagine the grief of GOD in the question, “**What shall I do unto thee?**”

“What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild

grapes” (Isaiah 5:4)?

This is the picture of a parent and how he feels toward a wayward child. The child disobeys over and over, no matter what restraint is used, and does not learn the lesson. The punishment must become more severe, until finally the parent must cut the child off. Such punishment is never easy, never pleasant for a parent, but it is necessary. GOD had done all that He could; there was nothing left but to turn them over to the Assyrians and Babylonians, respectively.

“Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.” This points up the shallowness of the people’s repentance and is like the old saying, *“Beauty is only skin deep.”* They appeared to turn to GOD, but inwardly they still held to their former sinful condition. Thus, one sees the illustration here. Whatever **“goodness”** they might have had was like the **“morning cloud”** (fog) and the **“early dew”** which are only there for a brief period of time and then are burned away by the sun. In other words, whatever goodness they might have attained, it did not last and, just as quickly as the passing of dew and fog, was gone.

“So it was with the whole Jewish people; so it is with the most hopeless class of sinners; ever beginning anew, ever relapsing; ever making a show of leaves, good feelings, good aspirations, but yielding no fruit” (Pusey, p. 66).

Hosea 6:5 “Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the Words of My mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.”

“Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the Words of My mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.” (ASV)

The word **“hew”** signifies the shaping or

cutting involved in making an object. Its significance seems to be GOD’s attempts at molding His people through the voice of the prophets. The stonecutter who tried to shape the marble sometimes found the stone unable to take the desired change, thus shattering under his blows. GOD had sent His molding message by the prophets

One of the things which should be very evident, is that GOD’s Word is indeed powerful. It is able to accomplish whatever purpose GOD has in mind.

“Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces” (Jeremiah 23:29).

“For the Word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

“The word of God will be the death either of the sin or of the sinner” (Henry, p. 1113).

GOD gave the people instructions through the prophets and through the same source He condemned them when they refused to be molded as He desired. The words GOD spoke were just, and Israel’s disobedience to them caused her to be slain. The judgments of GOD, when rendered, are as clear as the day, i.e., they are visible to all as being just.

People today need to heed all that is recorded in this book, because the principles stated here are just as true today as they were then. A pattern for man’s development into an image acceptable to GOD has been given in the New Testament. Today, any man who refuses to allow those words to mold him as GOD

desires will ultimately be destroyed by those words.

“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Hosea 6:6 “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of GOD more than burnt offerings.”

“For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of GOD more than burnt-offerings.” (ASV)

“For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of GOD more than burnt offerings.” (NKJV)

DESIRED — hapes — *“To incline to; by implication (literally but rarely) to bend; figuratively, to be pleased with, desire:--X any at all, (have, take) delight, desire, favour, like, move, be (well) pleased, have pleasure, will, would”* (Strong’s, CD); *“To find pleasure in, take delight in, be pleased with, have an affection for; to desire; to choose; to bend, bow. The main meaning is to feel a strong positive attraction for something, to like someone or something very much”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to delight in, to have pleasure, to have favor, to be pleased”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 364).

KNOWLEDGE — daat — *“This noun means knowledge, insight, intelligence, understanding, wisdom, cunning. It is knowledge which was gained through the senses...describes the proper relationship between God and a man who truly obeys Him”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine noun meaning knowledge, knowing, learning, discernment, insight, and notion”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 245).

“The sacrifices and burnt-offerings initiated by Jehovah at Sinai were now being abused by the people.

They thought that by these outward tokens of devotion, void of the piety, all their wickednesses were taken care of” (Hailey, p. 156).

Those of Israel (and some in Judah), like many today, believed that as long as they made the prescribed sacrifices, claiming to be followers of GOD, everything would be all right — GOD would accept them. They obeyed these outward signs of following GOD, but inwardly there was no real love for GOD. Could that be the problem with those who will show up for one worship service on Sunday and not again until the next Sunday? These words are not concerned with those who are hindered by sickness or necessity of some other kind (must work, an act of mercy such as helping at a car accident when they were on the way to services, et cetera). These are people who could attend the Bible Study period, who could come back on Sunday night for more worship to GOD and fellowship with Him and their brethren, who could attend Wednesday night Bible Study — but they choose not to. When people do not have the proper knowledge of GOD and the right attitude of love for GOD which grows from such, their actions will not be right, and their worship will not be accepted by GOD. That is what was wrong with the sacrifice Saul wanted to make.

“Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Samuel 15:22).

GOD would have taken great delight in

the sacrifices and offerings Saul made, **IF** Saul had been obedient to him in the first place. Saul did not obey GOD's commands with regard to destroying the Amalekites and everything they owned, so he could not worship and think that made everything OK with GOD — because it would not! Not only did Saul disobey GOD in saving the best, he then wanted to commit an act of abomination by sacrificing these very things to GOD.

The question must be asked, *How many today simply go through the motions of worship without proper understanding coupled with obedience to and love for GOD? How many attend worship services because it is expected of them, not because they really want to be there to worship GOD? How many attend worship service because they think that it takes care of the sins and shortcomings of the previous week?* It is important to remember the words of Jesus.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23, emphasis mine, RK).

Here were people who did many things in the name of the Lord, but they did not do them according to the will of the Father. Jesus said He never knew such people and told them to depart because their works were works of iniquity.

There are some that teach that what one does in worship is not important, or that you really do not need to worship with others.

The text here and others like First Samuel 15:22 are then cited to supposedly prove their point. Is that accurately portraying what the Bible teaches? NO! What they teach would imply (at the very least) that worship has no real value. A question for those who say that these verses teach that correct form and method is not important: **Why did GOD command worship and dictate its form and content if it is not important?** People who advocate that these things are not important simply want to do whatever they deem proper or what is convenient for them. This kind of thinking is where the attitude comes from which says, *“It will not hurt anything if I miss one worship service to go to the family reunion, stay home with company, go to this or that event just this one time, et cetera.”* Such thinking shows a lack of love for GOD and will cause the Lord to someday say to them, **“I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”**

True knowledge of GOD, coupled with loving obedience, will cause the actions of both life and worship to be acceptable to GOD and lead that one to an eternal home with Him.

Hosea 6:7 “But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against Me.”

“But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against Me.” (ASV)

MEN — adam — *“This noun usually refers to mankind in the collective sense. It is also a proper noun, Adam, the first man whom God created”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A masculine noun meaning a male, any human being, or generically the human race. The word is used to signify a man, as opposed to a woman...The first man used this word as a proper noun, ‘Adam’”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 15).

TRANSGRESSED — abar — “To cross over, pass over, go over; to go through, penetrate; to go beyond; to pass by; to pass along, travel; to pass away, to disappear; to go forward; to transgress, cause to trespass; to depart; to bolt, shut; to impregnate; to lead over, transport, conduct across; to remove; to transfer; to lead along; to lead through; to bring; to be irritated; to be angry, fall into a passion. The principal meaning of this verb is movement of something in relationship to a stationary object. There are four basic shades of meaning: (1) To go beyond a certain physical point...(2) Sometimes there is movement between two particular places...(3) Solomon’s wealth was surpassing that of all others...(4) Spiritually, when men move outside the requirements of the covenant by committing sin, they transgress” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to pass through or over, to cover, to go beyond, to go along, to be crossed over, to make to cross over, to go through, to go away. This verb indicates the physical act of crossing or passing over and takes on a figurative usage that exhibits many variations in meaning. Two figurative meanings are of primary importance theologically; the verb means going beyond, over-stepping a covenant or a command of God or man” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 799).

TREACHEROUSLY — bagad — “To act covertly or fraudulently, secretly, deceptively; to cheat, betray; to oppress, to afflict, to spoil” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to deal treacherously with, to be traitorous, to act unfaithfully, to betray” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 117).

The very first covenant ever made regarding human beings was in the Garden of Eden.

“The LORD GOD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of

good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Some might say, “That was a command, not a covenant.” The reason some would say that is because they believe a covenant is an agreement worked out between two parties, not a command given by one and obeyed by another. But when there is a covenant regarding GOD, man does not set the boundaries of that agreement. Biblically, a covenant is GOD setting the rules and man agreeing to obey those rules in order to reap the benefit of eternal life.

GOD created Adam and then placed him in the beautiful paradise of Eden. But Adam transgressed GOD’s law; he betrayed GOD’s marvelous grace (lovingkindness). Thus, GOD had no choice but to drive him from that paradise lest he should live forever (GOD never intended for man to die when He created him.).

“Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD GOD sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken” (Genesis 3:22-23).

From that day forth, mankind has shown how treacherously he can deal with the One who can and is willing to so graciously benefit him.

Bringing this down to the time of Hosea and Israel, one sees the same picture unfold. GOD had nurtured His people, begetting them from Egyptian bondage into a mighty nation. He supplied their every need in the wilderness, though they often grumbled and complained. He provided a

place for them to live which was “**flowing with milk and honey**” (Exodus 3:8). What did they do to their benefactor? They betrayed Him. Instead of honoring and obeying Him, they acted like an adulterous woman chasing after false benefactors (idols, false gods). GOD had no choice but to drive them out of the land into captivity.

Jump ahead a number of years, and GOD gave mankind one final covenant — the Christian covenant. He has set down the terms of the covenant, but mankind in general will not accept it. But, there are those who have accepted it, agreeing to live by its standards — Christians. Unfortunately, some Christians act treacherously, rebelling against His commands by changing His laws for worship to suit their own likes and dislikes. Some act just as immorally as the Israelites did before their idols and, like them, claim to be serving Him.

Hosea was calling for the nation to repent. Is not that call needed just as badly today in the kingdoms of the world, and indeed in the greatest kingdom of all — the church?

Hosea 6:8 “Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood.”

“Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity; it is stained with blood.” (ASV)

INIQUITY — awen — “*This is a major Hebrew word for sin. It means vanity, breath, vainness, nothingness, falseness, falsehood, idol, idolatry, sin, wickedness, sorrow, distress, hardship, toil. The kjv translates the word with: iniquity, wicked, sorrow, vanity, wickedness, mourning, mourners, affliction, false, unjust. The word focuses upon the planning and expression of deception, pointing more to the consequences of sin*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A masculine noun meaning nothingness, trouble, sorrow, evil, or mischief. The*

primary meaning is that of emptiness and vanity” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 26).

POLLUTED — aqob — “*A knoll, a hill (which swells up), an uneven place: hence, deceitful, fraudulent, crooked, polluted; a liar in wait*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*This form actually represents two adjectives. The first means deceitful, insidious, ‘foot-printed’...The other usage is related to the word for footprint. To describe the wickedness of Gilead, the prophet called it a town of bloody footprints. The second adjective means steep, hilly*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 863).

Clarke believes Gilead is the place where Jacob and Laban made their covenant of non-aggression at a heap of stones they set up (p. 636). Baker/Carpenter say the name means “*heap of testimony*” (p. 206). It is interesting to this writer that most commentators believe Gilead was a region in Israel and not a city (east of Jordan from the south of the Sea of Galilee to the northern shore of the Dead Sea). What makes this interesting to this writer is that the Hebrew word translated as “**city**” in this verse (qiryah), means “*city or town*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1015). Whether this passage speaks of a city or a region, the lesson is the same — it is filled with iniquity and blood. It seems possible to this writer that this may be referring to Ramoth-gilead, a city of refuge, a priestly city, when the next verse is considered.

If indeed Ramoth-gilead is the city under consideration, consider the change which has taken place. Formerly it was a city of refuge where safety could be found from the avenger of blood. Now it has become a place filled with iniquity and the shedding of blood. It is a city which righteous people would avoid. This would emphasize just how wicked Israel had become.

In studying the words “**iniquity**” and “**polluted**,” one sees a city and nation filled with wickedness. It is filled with so much violence that the blood of those slain is being tracked throughout, i.e., the evidence of their iniquity is everywhere. Thus, their wickedness cannot be denied. The land was defiled, became impure, because of all this blood.

Hosea 6:9 “And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness.”

“And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way toward Shechem; yea, they have committed lewdness.” (ASV)

TROOPS OF ROBBERS — gedud — “*This word means cut, furrow; collection of warriors, troop of soldiers, army, band (of men), company, plunderers, scouring party, attack. Generally, this noun describes a marauding military raid. Men engaging in such activity could have even been mercenaries or looters*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A masculine noun meaning a band, a troop. It is used to indicate a marauding band, a raiding party, or a group that makes inroads into enemy territory*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 185).

CONSENT — sekem — “*A masculine noun used to indicate consent, shoulder to shoulder. The phrase shoulder to shoulder indicates sharing in a common effort or open consent to something whether bad or good*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1139).

COMMIT — asah — “*This important root means to work, labor, toil; to make, create, construct, build; to accomplish; to acquire, earn, procure; to prepare; to offer, sacrifice; to appoint; to constitute; to keep; to fulfill; to happen; to be; to handle; to squeeze*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to do, to*

make, to accomplish, to complete. This frequently used Hebrew verb conveys the central notion of performing an activity with a distinct purpose, a moral obligation, or a goal in view” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 876).

LEWDNESS — zimmah — “*It is a plan, counsel; an evil deed, lewdness, a wicked deed; incest; apostasy. zimmah more often depicts bad advice...It is a sin of uncleanness, particularly fornication; rape, or incest*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A feminine noun meaning plan, purpose, counsel, wickedness, lewdness, sin. The word refers to the plans and purposes of the mind which give rise to one’s actions. Yet the word rarely pertains to good intentions*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 293).

Shechem was a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7) and a city of the Levites (Joshua 21:21). It was also the place where Joshua gave his last discourse to Israel. In those last words, he warned Israel to follow GOD, making a wise choice between Him and the pagan gods which surrounded them.

“Fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, GOD forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods” (Joshua 24:14-16).

What a difference is seen from that time until the present text. They had faithfully

promised to serve GOD and Him only. Now they were far removed from Him.

As a city of refuge, Shechem (note ASV and NKJV) was an important city, its location also making it important. The city itself was located in a valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. This was a natural stopping place for travelers on their way to Jerusalem for the sacrifices. Cities of refuge were cities to which an unintentional slayer of blood could flee and gain safety from the avenger of blood (Joshua 20:9). These cities had been designated as places that would minimize the shedding of blood — places of justice. The roads to these cities were to be kept in excellent condition so that there would be nothing to hinder those who needed to flee to them (Deuteronomy 19:3). But this road, which connected Ephraim with Jerusalem, had become a murderer's row. It was a place where blood was frequently shed and justice was not to be found.

The priests had become "**as troops of robbers.**" In the word studies above, it can be seen that they had banded together in groups like an army or military raiding parties to accomplish their goals. It should be recalled that when Jeroboam became king of the northern tribes, he ordained calf worship and made men priests of the "**lowest**" class (1 Kings 13:33). Is it little wonder then that they acted in the ways described in this context? Instead of guiding people to be spiritual and moral people, they guided them to be corrupt.

Notice that they are described as being murderers by "**consent.**" This word literally is "*shoulder to shoulder,*" i.e., they worked together to accomplish this through singleness of mind. JFB quotes Rivetus as saying, "*The image is of oxen putting their shoulders together to pull the same yoke*" (p. 480).

The priests are further said to "**commit lewdness.**" "**Commit**" means they worked

at accomplishing their goals of immorality. Pusey says the word "lewdness" "*Literally means a thing thought of, especially an evil, and so, deliberate, contrived, bethought of wickedness*" (p. 69). Their sins of murder and lewdness were not things which just happened — an accident. Instead, they were well thought out, planned and then accomplished.

Regarding the word "**lewdness,**" Cook states, "*Elsewhere this word (zimmah) is used of the vilest sexual sins, including incest (Lev. 18:17), cult prostitution (Lev. 19:29), rape (Jud. 20:5-6), and adultery (Job 31:9-11)*" (p. 1394).

Hosea 6:10 "I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled."

"In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing: there whoredom is found in Ephraim, Israel is defiled." (ASV)

When GOD looked around Israel, all He could see was the horrible thing that Israel had become. This nation which owed its very existence to Him, the nation He had so richly blessed, was unfaithful to Him. The whole nation was given to idolatry and immorality and its religious leaders had even turned to murder. GOD's chosen people had stooped to such a base level that it was horrible, it was frightening to see how far they had gone. When GOD looked at His people, all that could be seen was their guilt. Further, with all the pleading for repentance, they seemed to scoff at GOD and his pleas for reform.

Hosea 6:11 "Also, O Judah, He hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of My people."

"Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for thee, when I bring back the captivity of My people." (ASV)

Hosea is allowed to look ahead in time

and issues another warning to Judah. The people have sinned against GOD and will have to pay for their transgressions. The chosen seed shall come from Judah, but that did not exempt them from GOD's righteous judgment for their sins.

“They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind”
(Hosea 8:7).

“Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same” (Job 4:8).

While denouncing their sins, hope is held out to Judah. It is this author's belief that the harvest spoken of here refers to the harvest of souls which would and did come at the time of the Messiah. It should be remembered that a harvest can either be good or bad. This particular reference appears to be a good harvest, a harvest for those who returned from the seventy years of captivity in Babylon.

“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” (Galatians 6:7-8).

Hosea Chapter Seven

Hosea 7:1 “When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.”

“When I would heal Israel, then is the iniquity of Ephraim uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria; for they commit falsehood, and the thief entereth in, and the troop of robbers ravageth without.” (ASV)

DISCOVERED — galah — “*To bare, denude, strip, unveil, disclose, reveal; to evacuate a country, to emigrate, to go into exile; to be uncovered, unveiled, revealed; to appear, to show, reveal or bare oneself; to be led away; to uncover, open, to be removed; to be led or driven into exile (Judg. 18:30; Amos 1:5; Nah. 3:5). This word contains the principal idea of stark exposure, to make naked. In many passages it has the connotation of “to shame.”*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to reveal, to be revealed, to uncover, to remove, to go into exile, to reveal oneself, to expose, to disclose... On occasion, it is used in the expression to uncover the nakedness of, which often implies sexual relations*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 202).

FALSEHOOD — seger — “*It is an untruth, a*

sham, a lie, lying words, a liar, a lying witness, a falsehood, fraud, deceit; deceitfulness, a vain, unreliable thing, perjury; false prophecy” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A noun meaning a lie, vanity, without cause. This word is used of a lying witness; of false prophets; of telling lies; and of a liar*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1195).

In this passage, the three seats of government are illustrated — the nation (Israel), the tribe (Ephraim), and the capital city (Samaria). All are referred to as being evil, full of iniquity. It should also be observed that the terms “**Ephraim**” and “**Samaria**” are often used to designate the whole nation.

GOD desired to heal the nation and would have done so through the teaching of His prophets and/or the chastisements He sent upon the people. But the more mercy He showed them, the more they sinned against Him. Their sin was like a disease which needed healing, but when the disease was examined, it was discovered to be far worse than was initially suspected and had reached a point of no return. The medicine’s ineffectiveness showed how great the disease had become. Further, the medicine was ineffective because the patients refused to accept the remedy which would bring about the healing. This passage reminds one of the Lord’s words in Matthew 23:37.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Emphasis mine, RK)

The word “**discovered**” is used to show that their sin (iniquity) was laid open, plainly revealed, for all to see. All outer facades of decency were removed from Israel by GOD in order to show the

ugliness of her character.

Notice the difference between the thief and robber. As used here, the thief is one who works from within (usually in a non-violent manner), while robbers work without in a more open and violent manner. The thief robs one in the home; the robber operates in the streets. This is what was happening to Israel. Israel was robbed from within by her rulers. Her strength was being removed by rulers who moved GOD's boundary lines of morality and spirituality. The robbers (probably Assyria) were robbing her from without (tribute), because she depended upon Assyria for protection instead of GOD.

Hosea 7:2 "And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before My face."

"And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now have their own doings beset them about; they are before My face." (ASV)

The lawless rulers and people acted as if there would be no judgment. How could they think this way? They had blinded themselves from seeing their wretched condition. The only way they could do this was to think that GOD was like man, that with time He would forget their transgressions. When man does not constantly consider GOD and His will, his action will quickly show it. Man must never forget that GOD knows everything he does or thinks and does not forget until man repents of his sins.

"I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5:12).

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

"Unto the wicked GOD saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget GOD, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:16-22).

Further, the people of Israel had the record of GOD's punishments which had been inflicted on the evildoers — whether they were pagans or His own people. Yet, they acted as if they would not have to pay a penalty for their own sins.

"At first, men feel the deformity of certain sorts of wickedness. When accustomed to them, men think that God is indifferent to what no longer shocks themselves" (Pusey, p. 72).

But GOD does not become indifferent to sin as does man. The Israelites sins had become so great that their consciences no longer convicted them. Their sins were wrapped around them like a garment which

everyone else could see, but they could not see them.

For all the evil which the people of Israel had done, the time had come for them to reap the whirlwind. Their own sins were their downfall — not the sins of others.

“His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins” (Proverbs 5:22).

“He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate” (Psalm 7:15-16; “pate” - scalp).

“In vain wouldest thou think, that the manifold ways of man are too small, too intricate, too countless, to be remembered by God. God says, ‘They are before My face’” (Pusey, p. 72).

Hosea 7:3 **“They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.”**

“They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.” (ASV)

The word **“they”** speaks of the people in general. They made Jeroboam and the kings which followed him rejoice by following his/their wickedness (rebellion to GOD through idolatry), and they had continued to make their rulers happy by following the evil they upheld. Baker/Carpenter show that the word **“glad”** carries with it the idea of *“gloating,”* as well as its normal meanings of rejoicing and joyfulness.

When the people follow wicked rulers, they in turn curse each other and feed off of others’ evil. Consider that the government of Israel (kings and princes) was “legalizing”

sin. Once a sin is legalized by government, many seem to feel it is then perfectly right to participate in it, regardless of what GOD’s law states. In fact, it is often thought that if the state legalizes something, then GOD will approve it, too. Such is not the case! Legalizing something on a civil level does not legalize it on a spiritual level! Consider America today. The government has legalized murder (abortion) and theft (lotteries). Some state governments have legalized homosexuality with same sex marriages. Friend, are you worried about how long it will be before America reaches the same condition of Israel of old?

Their lie was in telling themselves and their rulers that the adultery, idolatry, and lawlessness in general were perfectly all right. In a sense, they even looked upon it as being better than living under GOD’s laws — otherwise they would not have done these things. In America, adultery, homosexuality and murder used to be great matters of shame. Now they are considered normal activities, as people more and more worship the **god of self**. The rulers had a responsibility to lead the people in right doing (righteousness). Instead, they led them in sin. When rulers abdicate their responsibility to lead their nation in righteousness, that nation is doomed.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

Instead of rebuking the people, the rulers rejoiced in their sins.

“Knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:32).

Hosea 7:4 **“They are all adulterers, as an**

oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened.”

“They are all adulterers; they are as an oven heated by the baker; he ceaseth to stir the fire, from the kneading of the dough, until it be leavened.” (ASV)

“**They are all adulterers**” indicates all the people (kings, princes, priests, people). The Hebrew word indicates that they were **habitual adulterers**; it was a constant habit or practice with them. Who was behind their adultery (spiritual and physical)? It is here described as a baker who stoked the fires of desire for that which GOD forbid. Is this speaking about Jeroboam or about all of the leaders of the nation down through time? These “bakers” stoked the fires of rebellion, preparing the hearts of the people for eventual take-over by planting the yeast of rebellion in their hearts. Then they patiently sat back and waited for the temptations to take hold.

Though this passage is highly figurative and hard to understand, one thing is certain. Their adulterous passions are like a heated oven, ready to bake the bread as soon as the bread has risen. The fire is ever ready to act upon what is brought to it. So also were they always prepared to break out into unfaithfulness.

“The people allow their hearts to smolder and simmer with evil thoughts and imaginations and plans, like the smoldering fire built by the baker near which he places his kneaded dough ready to bake in the morning when he will fan the coals into a roaring fire. The people go to bed at night with their evil plans smoldering in their hearts to awake in the morning and fan the coals into roaring deeds of evil” (Butler, p. 500).

Hosea 7:5 “In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles

of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorers.”

“On the day of our king the princes made themselves sick with the heat of wine; he stretched out his hand with scoffers.” (ASV)

BOTTLES — hemah — *“It means warmth, heat, anger, wrath, rage, indignation; poison”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A noun meaning wrath, heat. The word is also synonymous with the feminine noun meaning heat or rage. Figuratively it can signify anger, hot displeasure, indignation, poison, or rage”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 348).

HAND — yad — *“Hand; power, strength, assistance”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine noun meaning hand, strength. The word frequently appears in the Old Testament with literal, figurative, and technical uses”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 418).

SCORNERS — Lesasiym or lasas — *“A masculine noun meaning a scoffer, a scorner. It is used in a masculine plural participial form to indicate those who rebel or scorn...A verb meaning to mock”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 554).

“**In the day of our king**” probably refers to some holiday which specifically applies to the king — an anniversary of some kind. Whatever this occasion was, it had become a time of excesses where alcohol flowed and partying was uncontrolled. Consider that even “religious holidays” in America are now consumed with this kind of behavior. Note what the Bible says about such consumption of alcohol.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1).

Further notice the inspired words of the Proverbs writer with regard to rulers (leaders) and alcoholic beverages.

“It is not for kings to drink wine;

nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted” (Proverbs 31:4-5).

Is this not what Nadab and Abihu (the priests) did in Leviticus chapter ten? Their consumption of alcohol caused them to forget the Law of GOD with regard to the offering of incense. Such cost them their life, and those who do such today will also pay a penalty — the loss of their souls.

Considering alcohol, one should always remember that it takes away the control factor in one’s mind that allows him to restrain himself from certain activities in which he would never participate if he were not under alcohol’s influence. The young lady who would never disrobe in public, after a few drinks sheds her clothes on a table or worse. The young man who would not indulge himself with a prostitute while sober, after a few drinks gives in to her wiles. The person who would not rob or murder someone, after a few drinks does just that. On and on the list could be written of all the things done by those who have the restraints of their mind loosened or removed by alcohol.

Who did the king associate with? Scorners (scoffers). There can be little doubt that these are those who mock that which is right, that which is righteous. They are those who promote lawlessness — both secular and the religious lawlessness against the authority of GOD. With whom should a ruler associate? The good, the righteous. Obviously the rulers of Israel preferred base people to godly people.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2).

“An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire” (Proverbs 16:27).

Jude talks about men like the leaders of Israel of whom Hosea speaks. He said they walk after their own desires instead of following GOD’s will.

“Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts” (Jude 17-18).

Hosea 7:6 “For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.”

“For they have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.” (ASV)

“He gives the reason for their bursting out into open mischief; it was ever stored up within. They made ready, (literally, brought near) their heart. Their heart was ever brought nigh to sin. even while the occasion was removed at a distance from it” (Pusey, p. 73).

They had heated up the desire for sin in their hearts so as to be ready at any opportunity which would allow them to consummate those desires. The idea of the fire is like the coals which lie dormant under the ashes. The fire appears to have gone out, but the energy is still there which will allow a flame to break forth when stirred. Like the banked fire, their evil hearts are simply waiting for the right time to break forth in sinful actions. A fire is banked for the purpose of allowing coals to remain hot under the surface, to be used later to create a roaring, consuming fire.

Hosea 7:7 “**They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto Me.**”

“They are all hot as an oven, and devour their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto Me.” (ASV)

“**Hot as an oven**” signifies an oven which has reached the stage where it is ready to accomplish the task for which it was designed. Here, it was the symbolic heart of the people, which was willing to consume their rulers (kings and judges — which may refer to the same people). A properly prepared oven is able to cook the food appropriately, but an overheated oven will quickly burn the food.

When looking back, this writer believes the “**judges**” of this passage refers to the prophets of GOD who lived in northern Israel and who tried to guide the people to GOD. As seen in the case of Jezebel, the true prophets seem to have been hunted down and destroyed.

Little is known as to who is meant by “**their kings are fallen.**” Very few of the kings of Israel died natural deaths. Many fell in rapid succession to assassination and some to foreign armies in battle.

“Of all the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, Baasha, Omri, Menahem, alone, in addition to Jehu and the three next of his house, died natural deaths” (Pusey, p. 74).

In the lifetime of Hosea, four kings of Israel were assassinated: “*Zechariah was slain by Shallum; Shallum, by Menahem; Pekahiah, by Pekah; and Pekah, by Hoshea, 2 Kings 15*” (Clarke, p. 637).

Probably the saddest part of this passage is not the devouring of their judges, nor the falling of their kings. The saddest thing was that “**there is none among them that calleth unto me.**” None of the kings of the northern tribes sought GOD. None of

them placed their trust in Him. Instead, they followed their own hearts’ desires and served the idols.

“Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up My people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD” (Psalm 14:4).

“There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee: for Thou hast hid Thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities” (Isaiah 64:7).

Note the following quote from Graham on these matters.

“Any nation that constructs its domestic policy and foreign policy like Israel did, by leaving God out of the picture and resorting to the strength of themselves and their neighbors, will fall as they fell...Such is the inevitable result of an earlier decision to put God out of their knowledge, decisions, and lives” (p. 158).

Does this sound like a nation today that you know?

Hosea 7:8 “**Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.**”

“Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned.” (ASV)

MIXED — balal — “*This is a primary root which means to pour over, to be anointed; to pour together; to confound, to mix, stain, soil; to be moistened*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to mix, to mingle, to tangle, to confuse, to bewilder, to perplex, to anoint. The word is often used in a technical sense to signify the mixing of oil with the fine flour used to bake cakes without yeast that were then presented as grain offerings*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 141).

GOD had instructed the Israelites in the very beginning of their existence as a nation to remain separated from the heathen around them. This was so that they would wholly depend on Him for their strength and comfort. If they remained separate from those around them, they would not have their service and worship to GOD corrupted. But when they entered the promised land, they did not obey GOD — they did not destroy the nations as instructed. Instead, with time, they mingled with these nations and eventually adopted their ways. As they intermingled (mixed, married) with them, they began serving their gods, and the snare GOD had warned them about came to pass.

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy GOD shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly” (Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

What the Israelites did was exactly what GOD had warned them not to do, and these nations influenced them to turn from the GOD of Heaven to the non-gods of the

heathen. They mixed these religions together with that of GOD, thus completely turning away from Him. This is exactly what Catholicism has done since its inception.

“They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them” (Psalm 106:34-36).

“A cake not turned” is a strange concept to modern America. First, it should be understood that it is not “cake” as thought of today, but rather their bread of which the text speaks. To illustrate what is spoken of here, perhaps one should think of a pancake. A pancake not turned would be burnt on the one side while raw on the other side — not suitable for its intended use — rather something which is worthless and to be thrown away.

“In the East, having heated the hearth, they sweep one corner, put the cake upon it, and cover it with embers; in a short time they turn it, covering it again, and continue this several times, till they find it sufficiently baked” (Clarke, p. 637).

“Ephraim is a cake not turned” shows what this mixing with the nations around them had made Ephraim become. A cake not turned is not fit for consumption. By mixing with the nations, *“they were ‘cooked’ by heathenism but ‘uncooked’ or raw in their relation to God”* (Hailey, p. 159). As stated above, a cake not turned is only fit to be cast aside. As long as Ephraim maintained her relationship with the nations, her dependency upon them and their gods, she was fit only for destruction. It is much like salt which has lost its flavor (Matthew 5:13) — good for nothing, deserving only to be cast out.

Did the cake burn on one side because the baker fell asleep? In the mode of sleep, one does not know what is going on around him. Instead of sleeping, the nation should have been watching in order to be the kind of loaf palatable to GOD.

“How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man” (Proverbs 6:9-11).

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:5-6).

In both of the passages above, the idea is of being prepared for the future, thus, not allowing one's self to be lulled into neglectful sleep. Be busy in the Lord's service, not in the Devil's service. The only way to do this is to be vigilant.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Hosea 7:9 “Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.”

“Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not.” (ASV)

STRANGERS — zur — “To press together, to press out, to bind up, to crush, to squeeze; to recede, to retreat, to turn away or aside; to be a stranger or foreigner, to be

adulterous; to be estranged” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to be a stranger. The basic meaning of this word is to turn aside (particularly for lodging); therefore, it refers to being strange or foreign. It can mean to go astray, to be wayward. The participle is used frequently as an adjective, signifying something outside the law of God; a person outside the family” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 2114).

GRAY HAIRS — seybah — “It means old age, gray hair”(Zodhiates, CD); “A feminine noun meaning old age or gray hair” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1130).

The “**strangers**” mentioned in this passage are the nations around them. They slowly drained the strength of Ephraim by encouraging him to be more like them; to depend upon them for help and encouragement — both physical and spiritual. All the while, true strength could have been had only by a complete reliance upon GOD. The more they relied upon themselves and their neighbors, the further they distanced themselves from their true strength — GOD. Compare the nation of Israel to a well-drilled and disciplined basketball team. As long as the players spend their time in drills and maintain tight discipline, they generally win games. But when they neglect those items which give them their strength and ability, and begin copying the habits of the less-disciplined teams around them, they began to lose more ball games. Coach John Wooden (UCLA) never scouted an opponent. When asked why, he replied that if his team played its game plan, then it would win. His teams were extremely well-disciplined and drilled in fundamentals and game plan. It is little wonder then that his teams won ten NCAA basketball titles in twelve years at a time when only conference champions advanced to the NCAA championships.

America is slowly but surely eliminating

GOD from its society and national existence, in many places even striving to eliminate the word "GOD" from use by its citizens. Even more tragic is the church in many places which turns away from GOD with desires to be liked and accepted by the denominations around it. When the church is not willing to discipline itself in following the old paths (the laws of GOD), it will soon lose its identity just as the ten tribes did.

The Israelites allowed the nations around them to drain them of their strength by turning away from their real source of strength — GOD. Because of this, the nations were allowed by GOD to drain them of their natural resources through heavy taxation as payment for protection. Further, these wars and incursions drained their manpower. Read First and Second Kings for details on all of the incursions and tribute which was paid out. If they had but continued to follow GOD's laws with a loving heart, they would have been safe from all foreign nations.

The significance of "**gray hairs**" is the act of growing old and nearing the time of departure from this life. In the human condition, gray hair signifies old age. When the hair begins to turn gray, however, it is hardly noticed unless one is vain about his/her looks. The change usually takes place gradually, and because it is a gradual process one often fails to see the loss of strength and the end which it signifies. For Ephraim, the time is much later than he thought because he failed to see the obvious signs. The opportunities which had been missed could never be reclaimed — they are gone forever.

Israel may not have recognized her decayed position, but the nations around her did. This led to increased attacks upon her until eventually she fell.

"Sometimes a person burns their-self out and does not realize it is later than they think" (Richard Curry, class

notes).

The death of the nation is at hand, but it did not know it. One should remember the example of Samson here. He betrayed the Lord, and when his hair was shaved, his strength (GOD) departed from him (Judges 16:20).

"The loss of the knowledge of God deprives an individual and a nation of the ability to recognize their true nature and the impending judgment" (Laetsch, p. 65).

Hosea 7:10 "And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their GOD, nor seek Him for all this."

"And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: yet they have not returned unto Jehovah their GOD, nor sought Him, for all this." (ASV)

One should observe the similarity of Hosea 5:5 to the present passage under consideration.

There are generally two views as to what or who "**the pride of Israel**" is. One view is that the "**pride of Israel**" is GOD Himself. This view would have GOD testifying in the faces of the Israelites with regard to their sins. This would have been accomplished through the calamities which they faced from their natural enemies, the nations around them. The second view is that the "**pride of Israel**" refers to the haughty pride of the people in thinking they did not need to follow GOD exactly; they could accomplish their goals on their own.

Pride was one of the chief problems of Israel, almost from the beginning. Is not pride one of the major problems of man in every age? It is one of the tools Satan uses to remove man from GOD in order to destroy his soul ("**the pride of life**," 1 John 2:16). Pride had caused many of the afflictions which the people of Israel had suffered and would cause her eventual

destruction. They took pride in their new found “friends” instead of being proud of the relationship they should have had with GOD. GOD should have been their pride.

Even after all of the afflictions which had already fallen upon them at the time Hosea wrote, they refused to recognize their condition and turn back to GOD. They did not seek His counsel, mercy or forgiveness. They simply would not repent. They preferred their own way of trying to solve their problems instead of GOD’s way (Sound familiar today?). Pride often causes one to refuse to admit his weakness and/or sin.

“For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 9:13).

“When Hosea wrote, the country was sinking into anarchy; corruption had entrenched itself throughout the whole nation and was seated upon the throne itself; but nobody even thought of returning to the Lord” (Coffman, p. 131)!

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after GOD: GOD is not in all his thoughts” (Psalm 10:4).

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2).

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).

“A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Proverbs 29:33).

“Hear ye, and give ear; be not

proud: for the LORD hath spoken” (Jeremiah 13:15).

Hosea 7:11 **“Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.”**

“And Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria.” (ASV)

SILLY — patah — “A verb meaning to entice, to deceive, to persuade; to be gullible. It describes persons who are simple, naive, and overcome by vain things” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 929).

A dove is one of the simplest of all creatures. It is fairly easy to catch in the fowler’s net, because it tends to see only the food or water which it wishes to attain. But Ephraim is not simply called a dove, but a **“silly dove.”** The phrase **“silly dove”** is used to show the gullibility of Ephraim. Both Assyria and Egypt were its enemies bent on destroying her, yet which way did Ephraim fly when danger threatened? To whichever ones he thought would protect her from the other.

Ephraim flew from Assyria to Egypt, not understanding the danger in which she had placed herself. This passage, with the way it ends (**“they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria”**), seems to be an allusion to what would happen to Ephraim at the very end of its national existence. In Second Kings chapter fifteen, Israel is seen to be a vassal state of Assyria. Hoshea came to the throne of Israel by murdering Pekah. Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, brought his armies against Hoshea, and Hoshea became his servant. But Hosea rebelled against Assyria and appealed to Egypt for help. It was at this time that the Assyrians completely conquered Israel and dispersed the people throughout the empire. They never returned as a nation to the land GOD had originally given them (See 2 Kings 17). It happened just as the passage under

consideration said **“they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.”** Instead of seeking GOD’s help, they turned to their worst enemies, and they could not help them.

“As the dove betrays its silliness by fleeing in alarm from its nest, only to fall into the net of the fowler, so Israel, though warned that foreign alliances would be her ruin, rushed into them” (JFB, p. 483).

Hosea 7:12 **“When they shall go, I will spread My net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.”**

“When they shall go, I will spread My net upon them; I will bring them down as the birds of the heavens; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.” (ASV)

CHASTISE — yasar — *“To chastise, reprove, discipline, chasten, instruct; to be chastised; to learn reproof; to take a warning; to punish, correct, admonish; to be instructed. This Hebrew root has the definite connotation of either physical enforcement or verbal reinforcement. One becomes educated when the proper amount of training and correction are imposed”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to discipline, to chasten, to instruct, to teach, to punish. It is used with two general poles of meaning (chastening or instructing) that at times merge”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 454).

Since the imagery of a bird is used, they may have thought they could fly away from any impending danger, i.e., that there would always be a means of escape. But the wise fowler knows how to bring the bird down when it tries to escape. Instead of freedom, the fleeing **“silly dove”** will be brought down to earth in captivity. There seems to be a hint here that they thought they could flee from the promised chastisements of GOD. But Jonah learned that one cannot flee from GOD; there is no place to hide

from His retributive hand (Psalm 139:7-12). Israel was being assured that she could not escape GOD’s judgment, neither can anyone in any age.

“I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.” The word **“congregation”** simply means *“assembly.”* When in assembly, they had been warned by GOD about the consequences of disobedience to Him. This warning had not been given once, but many times. The reader should turn to Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68 and carefully and prayerfully read the warnings given to GOD’s people.

“Manifoldly had the message of reward on obedience, and of punishment on disobedience, come to Israel. It was spread throughout the law; it fills the book of Deuteronomy; it was concentrated in the blessing and the curse on mount Ebal and Gerizim; it was put into their mouths in the song of Moses; it was inculcated by all the prophets who had already prophesied to them, and now it was being enforced on that generation by Hosea himself” (Pusey, p. 76).

Thus, when the punishment came upon them, it was fair. They could not say they had not been warned. This point is true in every generation and every dispensation of time.

In passing, it is interesting that the same figure of a net is used of Zedekiah’s (ruler of Judah) being brought into captivity.

“My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in My snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there” (Ezekiel 12:13).

Hosea 7:13 **“Woe unto them! for they**

have fled from Me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against Me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against Me.”

“Woe unto them! for they have wandered from Me; destruction unto them! for they have trespassed against Me: though I would redeem them, yet they have spoken lies against Me.” (ASV)

TRANSGRESSED — pasa — “*This significant verb means to send; to break away (from a righteous authority), rebel; to trespass, transgress; to apostatize, to be refractory; to quarrel; to be offended. The basic idea is an aggressive breach of a civil or religious relationship between two parties. In international political alliances it connoted the deliberate casting off of an allegiance, a conscious revolt*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to rebel, to transgress, to revolt, to sin...It means to sin, but the sin involved is one of revolt or rebellion in nearly every case*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 926).

Ominously, a woe is placed upon them. This had not been done quickly, rashly, or without reason. The woe was pronounced because they fled from His protective hand. They had deliberately cast off the restraints and blessings of GOD. GOD did not make them fit for destruction, i.e., He did not make them evil. But when they made themselves evil, He then treated them as the evil they had become.

“Though I redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against Me.” Pusey states, “*The I and they are both emphatic in Hebrew; ‘I redeemed;’ ‘They spoke lies’*” (p. 77). As one looks back through the history of Israel, he sees the truth of this passage illustrated time and time again. GOD redeemed them from Egyptian bondage. He kept them safe in the wilderness. In the book of Judges, He is repeatedly shown redeeming them from their enemies.

“Yet they have spoken lies against

Me.” How did they lie against GOD? They lied when they denied His power and right to rule over them in a supreme capacity. When they turned from Him to their idols, they were saying that the idols were greater than GOD and could do more for them than GOD. They brought destruction upon themselves because they revolted; they deliberately rebelled against GOD and His laws which were meant for their well-being. GOD would have redeemed them, but they refused redemption.

“Men speak lies against God, in their hearts, their words, their deeds, whenever they harbor thoughts, speak words, or act, so as to deny that God is what He is, or as to imply that He is not what He has declared Himself to be” (Pusey, p. 77).

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not” (Luke 13:34, emphasis mine, RK)!

Hosea 7:14 **“And they have not cried unto Me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against Me.”**

“And they have not cried unto Me with their heart, but they howl upon their beds: they assemble themselves for grain and new wine; they rebel against Me.” (ASV)

ASSEMBLE THEMSELVES — gur — “*A verb meaning to sojourn, to dwell as a foreigner; in the reflexive sense, to seek hospitality with*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 194).

“They have not cried unto Me with their heart.” What a sad refrain this statement is. They refused to call upon GOD, or if they did, there was no genuine

repentance. They might, at times, have given Him lip service, but at the core of their being, there was no real desire to honor Him. They were not sincere in any petitions they might have made.

“By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is GOD my Maker, Who giveth songs in the night; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven? There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely GOD will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it” (Job 35:9-13).

“They howled upon their beds.” This action of deep distress was not done through repentance, but rather in response to the afflictions they were going through. It is like the criminal in prison who laments his caged position, not because he is sorry for what he has done, but because he got caught.

“They assemble themselves for corn and wine.” What was their concern? It was the loss of their physical blessings and not the loss of the spiritual ones. They assembled, i.e., they sought the hospitality of food and drink. Their assembly was not to worship GOD, which reminds one of the Corinthians (chapter 11).

Their cries would do them no good. Why? Because they were in rebellion to GOD. They had removed themselves from His benevolent watch care; therefore, they could not expect His physical blessings.

Hosea 7:15 “Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against Me.”

“Though I have taught and strengthened their arms, yet do they devise mischief

against Me.” (ASV)

STRENGTHENED — hazag — “To be bound fast, be attached; to make firm, strengthen, support; to preserve; to be firm, be strong, be courageous, be valiant, be helpful; to conquer; to seize, retain, hold fast, keep; to gird; to encourage; to harden; to be obdurate” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to be strong, to strengthen, to be courageous, to overpower” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 326).

IMAGINE — hasab — “To count, count for, impute, esteem, reckon; to think, plan, make a judgment, imagine; to combine, devise, invent; to meditate; to abound. Its part. form denotes a weaver. The principal idea is that of using the mind in the activity of thinking, creating new ideas, good or evil” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to think, to devise, to reckon, to regard, to invent, to consider, to be accounted, to consider, to reckon oneself” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 385).

MISCHIEF — raah — “It means bad, of inferior quality, wicked, evil” (Zodhiates, CD); “An adjective meaning bad, evil” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1062).

“Though I have bound and strengthened their arms.” The word **“bound”** means to teach and discipline, as seen in the ASV and NKJV. This was a blessing from GOD so that they could be prepared for all conflicts which might be before them, whether carnal or spiritual. Not only did He provide knowledge for them, but He also gave them strength at times to overcome. Their strength came through trials and blessings. He had taught them in the wilderness through Moses, also through the prophets. They became a strong nation as they listened to and applied His will for them. How did they treat GOD in return for all their blessings? Ingratitude.

“They imagine mischief against me.”

The idea is that they wove, they fabricated evil against Him. They were guilty of malicious scheming against GOD, the very one who had given them their blessings. How did they do this? Through all of their plans to gain security from alliances with the nations around them and from their seeking physical blessings from the gods of paganism.

Hosea 7:16 “They return, but not to the Most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.”

“They return, but not to Him that is on High; they are like a deceitful bow; their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

“If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto Me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of My sight, then shalt thou not remove” (Jeremiah 4:1).

“They return, but not to the Most High.” In the defeats which the people of Israel was suffering, they returned to something but it was not to the Lord. The something they returned to can only be the false religions to which they had been molded for decades. Some expositors believe this refers to their turning back to the Lord in pretense only, but this writer believes it means they turned back to the idols based on the next section of this verse.

“They are like a deceitful bow.” This writer used to be heavily involved in archery, but had forgotten something about that sport. He was reminded of this knowledge when he read Clarke’s description of these ancient bows, which description follows.

“Which, when it is reflexed, in order to be strung, suddenly springs back into its quiescent curve; for eastern bows

stand in their quiescent state in a curve, something like 1 ; and in order to be strung must be bended back in the opposite direction. This bending of the bow requires both strength and skill; and if not properly done, it will fly back, and regain its former position; and this recoil endanger the archer — may even break an arm” (Clarke, Vol. 4, p. 638).

Having at one time owned a similar bow, this writer well remembers times when he was deceived into believing the bow had been strung correctly (or a string broke), only to suffer the consequences.

When the calamities and national disasters began falling upon Israel, she returned not to a reliance upon GOD for strength and safety, but to a reliance upon the false gods. Her leaders had carefully and persistently molded her into the servitude of these gods, just as the physical bow was molded to take the shape described above. The physical bow was made with skill and patience over time, not mass produced like modern bows. As stated above, the people of Israel had been carefully molded to serve these gods and had become so deeply entrenched to be like the gods they served that, when “push came to shove,” they snapped back to the shape molded by these gods — gross idolaters.

“Their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue.” Usually when a nation is conquered, the conquered nation’s leaders are punished in some way. The princes of Israel were going to perish by the sword. This may refer to falling in battle, or it may be by execution. Why were they going to fall to the sword? Because of the **“rage of their tongue.”** What was the **“rage of their tongue?”**

“The frenzy of their speech not only drew down God’s anger, but was the

instrument of their destruction. They misled the people; taught them to trust in Egypt, not in God; persuaded them to believe themselves, and to disbelieve God; to believe, that the enemy should depart from them and not carry them away captive. They worked up the people to their will, and so they secured their own destruction” (Pusey, p. 79).

“This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.” The word **“derision”** signifies *“ridicule or mockery,”* and so one sees the effect that Israel’s defeat would have on Egypt. This is significant in that Israel had sought help from Egypt. The people trusted Egypt to help them, but when Assyria attacked, Egypt sat back and did nothing to save them. When Assyria led them into captivity, Egypt did not protest, but ridiculed and mocked Israel for thinking that Egypt would come to her rescue.

“This same consequence of destruction awaits all nations that turn from reliance upon God to other nations or sources for their might. Is it not ironic that the nations from whom Israel sought aid offered none; and God, willing to aid, was spurned” (Graham, p. 166)?

“Any person or people who trusts in their own might or wisdom will be defeated, shamed and confused” (Butler, p. 507).

Hosea

Chapter Eight

Hosea 8:1 **“Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed My covenant, and**

trespassed against My law.”

“Set the trumpet to thy mouth. As an eagle He cometh against the house of Jehovah, because they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law.” (ASV)

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1).

The trumpet was used in various ways. Sometimes its use signaled festivities such as feasts, sometimes signals for armies, sometimes as warnings of an approaching enemy. It is used figuratively here of the warnings issued by the prophets, as is seen in the above passage from Isaiah. Specifically in this passage, GOD called upon Hosea to be the trumpet, the warning device, of Israel’s impending judgment. Here the warning specifically dealt with Assyria’s impending destruction of Israel. The prophets were often used by GOD to warn His people, as His watchmen.

“Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul” (Ezekiel 33:2-5).

The attack and captivity would come **“as an eagle,”** i.e., very swiftly and with power. Through Moses, GOD had warned

the people that this would be the case if they did not remain faithful to Him.

“The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young”
(Deuteronomy 28:49-50).

This can only have reference to the rapidity with which Shalmanesar (king of Assyria) invaded and captured the ten tribes. An eagle circles over its prey, then at the right moment, descends like a missile to strike it. A study of Biblical and secular history shows that Assyria had had its eye upon Israel for some time but was restrained by GOD from accomplishing its intentions. Now, GOD is removing the restraints, because Israel has gone too far.

Some contend that this is a prophecy against Judah and that Nebuchadnezzar is the eagle here. But the context would rule that out, as it deals with Israel (with no indication that Judah is included). The eagle is often employed in Scripture to signify the quick destruction imposed upon sinners by GOD. This terminology will be used with regard to Judah when her time of destruction comes and also for the destruction of Jerusalem. Coffman gives this interesting thought to ponder regarding Israel's capture by Assyria.

“God used Assyria as his chosen instrument in bringing about the destruction and captivity of the northern Israel, that, in fact, being his special object in the commission to Jonah; because, after their temporary repentance following the mission of Jonah, Assyria was preserved until the time was ripe for God to use that nation against Israel” (p. 138).

The warning trumpet, when sounded

from the wall of a city, would startle the people into action in order to defend themselves from attack. The warning from the prophets should have startled the people into realizing their danger and doing something about it. (It startled Nineveh into repentance, but not Israel.). Israel repeatedly ignored the warnings of the prophets. Preachers today often see the same thing happen, and then (surprisingly) when disaster strikes, they are often asked, *“Why did you not warn us?”*

Hosea is to tell them why this destruction was coming: **“they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law.”** GOD made a covenant with His people to provide for their needs, conditioned upon their faithfulness to Him. He had given them laws to govern their lives, but they turned their backs on both His covenant and His laws. Now it was time for them to reap their just rewards.

Hosea 8:2 “Israel shall cry unto Me, My GOD, we know Thee.”

“They shall cry unto Me, My God, we Israel know Thee.” (ASV)

A glimpse is given of the distress Israel felt as the invading armies swept over them. They claimed to **“know”** GOD, but their knowledge at this point is simply intellectual knowledge, not obedient knowledge. There is a vast difference in intellectual knowledge of GOD and loving Him enough to obey Him.

“Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

Their cry is basically the same cry Jesus said will be seen at the great judgment — a cry from fear and not from love.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

Also notice Matthew 15:8-9. **“This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”** (Matthew 15:8-9). This is exactly what was happening in the context of Hosea's writings.

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (Isaiah 29:13-14).

“They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezekiel 33:31).

What is pictured in this context is a common occurrence in life. How many live their lives as they please, never calling upon GOD for direction, thanksgiving, or forgiveness? Yet, when a great calamity comes into their lives, they cry out for GOD's help. It is said that there are no atheists in foxholes.

Hosea 8:3 “Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.”

“Israel hath cast off that which is good: the enemy shall pursue him.” (ASV)

GOOD — tobah — *“Good (as an adjective) in the widest sense; used likewise as a noun, both in the masculine and the feminine, the singular and the plural (good, a good or good thing, a good man or woman; the good, goods or good things, good men or women), also as an adverb (well):--beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, X fair (word), (be in) favour, fine, glad, good (deed, -lier, -liest, -ly, -ness, -s), graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, liketh (best), loving, merry, X most, pleasant, + pleaseth, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well ((-favoured))”* (Strong's, CD); *“It means good, pleasant, beautiful, excellent, lovely, delightful, convenient, joyful, fruitful, precious, sound, cheerful, kind, correct, righteous; the good, the right, virtue, happiness, pleasantness. It may refer to practical or economic benefits, wisdom, aesthetic or sensual goodness, happiness, or preference. An important meaning of the term is moral goodness, as contrasted with moral evil”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“An adjective meaning good, well-pleasing, fruitful, morally correct, proper, convenient. This word is frequently encountered in the Old Testament and is roughly equivalent to the English word good in terms of its function and scope of meaning. It describes that which is appealing and*

pleasant to the senses; is useful and profitable; is abundant and plentiful; is kind and benevolent; is good in a moral sense as opposed to evil; is proper and becoming" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 399).

This is GOD's answer to Israel's claim in the previous verse. The good that the people of Israel cast off can be nothing less than the grace and mercy GOD had exhibited to them through His covenant and constant care of them. They forsook GOD and fell from His grace; now the enemy would pursue them (2 Kings 17). Implied here is their utter defeat because GOD had abandoned them. Yet, they seemed surprised at this turn of events (Maybe they believed in once saved always saved.). They should not have been surprised, because GOD had repeatedly told them what He would do if they forsook Him. Study Deuteronomy 28:15-25.

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:24-27).

Hosea 8:4 "They have set up kings, but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off."

"They have set up kings, but not by Me; they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off." (ASV

"They have set up kings, but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." The kings and princes of Israel were set in power without the approval of GOD. Instead of seeking GOD's direction for and approval of their kings, they appointed those who actually brought them destruction. When looking back, even the first king of the united kingdom was chosen because of Israel's rebellion (Saul, 1 Samuel 8). In the northern kingdom of Israel, only two kings were appointed by GOD (Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11:30 and Jehu, 2 Kings 9). About these kings, Keil makes the following interesting comment.

"Jeroboam was already planning a revolt against Solomon (1 Kings 9:27), and led the gathering of the ten tribes when they fell away from the house of David (1 Kings 12:2). Of Jehu, again, it is expressly stated in 2 Kings 9:14, that he conspired against Joram" (Keil, p. 113).

It can be seen that Keil believes, in essence, that GOD permitted these men to be kings. This writer believes they were chosen for the purpose of punishment. Other than these two kings, all of the rest ascended the throne by their own wills and not GOD's will. This is emphasized by the words **"I knew it not"** — *"I did not acknowledge them."* Technically speaking, none of Israel's kings were of the anointed, because they were not from the seed of David.

"Of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off." It should be emphasized that all of the kings of northern Israel served idols instead of GOD. Instead, they took the blessings GOD gave them and turned them into a curse by abusing them. They took their wealth and made idols with it, beginning with Jeroboam I.

"Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of

gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made” (1 Kings 12:28-32).

Their idolatry and rebellion were the reasons for their downfall. They had been commanded not to make a graven image, much less worship one.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:4).

It was not the possession of wealth that condemned them (for GOD had promised them wealth); it was what they did with their wealth which was condemned.

“So a man chooses destruction or hell, if he chooses those things which, according to God’s known law and word, end in it” (Pusey, p. 82).

When one considers the entire history of the northern tribes, he quickly sees how this prophesy had been fulfilled. Their idolatry had caused all of them to be **“cut off.”**

“During 253 years, for which the kingdom of Israel lasted, eighteen kings reigned over it, out of ten different families, and no family came to a close, save by a violent death” (Pusey, p. 81).

Hosea 8:5 “Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; Mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?”

“He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria; Mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?” (ASV)

ANGER — ap — *“Refers to the breathing part of the body specifically the nose, nostril, or face. God made man a living being by breathing into his nostrils. By the act of breathing, emotions can be expressed. In anger the nose dilates and breathing becomes more intense. Aph, therefore, is normally used to refer to the anger of men and of God. This anger is expressed in the flaring of the nostrils. The word gives specific emphasis to the emotional aspect of anger and wrath, whereas its synonyms relate to other aspects”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, and anger”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 83).

KINDLED — harah — *“This root means to burn, be kindled, glow with anger, be incensed, grow indignant; to be zealous, act zealously. Unlike some of its synonyms, chaMraMh points to the fire or heat of the anger just after it has been ignited”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to burn, to be kindled, to glow, to grow warm. Figuratively, it means to get angry or to become vexed”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 376).

INNOCENCY — niqqayon — *“It means clearness, cleanness, innocence, innocency; bareness”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A*

masculine noun meaning cleanness, whiteness, innocence. The Hebrew word generally implies innocence or freedom from guilt applied in the realm of sexual morality; and ritual purification or personal conduct as it relates to worship" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 752).

Note the emphasis placed in this passage on "**Thy calf**" (which appears to stand for all of the idolatry of Israel). This calf did not come by the direction of GOD, but rather from their desire to cast GOD off. They caused themselves to be cast off by GOD. How would their idols cast them off because they worshipped them? When the calamity came and they called upon these man-made gods to help them, there would be no help, because these idols could not do anything for anyone. Looking back, it appears they learned calf worship in Egypt where "A white ox was worshipped under the name of Apis, at Memphis; and another ox under the name of Mnevis, was worshipped at On, or Heliopolis" (Clarke, p. 639). This conclusion seems to be confirmed when the Israelites thought Moses was no longer available to lead them. There they built a golden calf and worshipped it (Exodus 32).

The statement, "**Mine anger is kindled against them,**" probably has reference only to the people of Israel, but conceivably could also apply to the idols they served. Considering the context and the anger expressed here, does GOD condone the idea that one religion is as good as another? To ask is to answer.

Webster tells one that to "**attain**" means "to achieve, accomplish; to come into possession of" (CD version). The meaning of the latter part of this verse seems to be a comprehensive question. How long will they go on worshipping these worthless idols? How long will it take them to realize their sins and turn back to GOD where they can reclaim innocency? How long would it be

before they cleared themselves of their guilt through obedience to GOD?

Hosea 8:6 "For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not GOD: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces."

"For from Israel is even this; the workman made it, and it is no GOD; yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces." (ASV)

This passage clearly shows that an idol cannot be a god, simply because it is made by human hands. Notice the words of Pusey on this matter.

"The workman was rather a god to his idol, than it to him; for he made it; it was a thing made. To say that it was made, was to deny that it was God" (p. 82).

GOD is the Creator of all things, and it can only be the Creator who is GOD, and not the thing made. From their history, the Israelites should have seen the folly of worshipping a creature. Egypt had worshipped almost all creatures (if not all), yet the plagues had been against all idolatrous worship, and GOD had unequivocally shown that these things could not be gods through their inability to protect themselves.

These idols would be broken/destroyed. They could not save themselves from the coming destruction, much less the people who served them.

"To whom then will ye liken GOD? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall

not be moved” (Isaiah 40:18-20).

When considering the idea of being **“broken in pieces,”** it brings to mind an enemy who upon finding this golden image, would not carry it off as a revered image, but would rather break it into pieces for the gold itself and nothing more. He would then use it for his own purposes.

“In this verse Hosea states the fundamental problem in all deviations, departures, and distortions of the plan of God for man’s acceptable service and worship: it was from man, not from God...From God came the original plan for worshipping the true God instead of some image of God, but from humanity came all distortions, perversions, and counterfeits of that plan” (Graham, p. 171).

Hosea 8:7 “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.”

“For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: he hath no standing grain; the blade shall yield no meal; if so be it yield, strangers shall swallow it up.” (ASV)

The whirlwind is a symbol of destruction, devastating destruction.

“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” (Galatians 6:7-8).

They had sown folly and vanity in both the secular and spiritual realm — they would reap conquest. It is a simple fact of nature that one reaps more than he sows. This fact is further illustrated by the Lord in Matthew 13:23. There He used the common

illustration of a farmer planting and reaping. The farmer does not expect to receive only one grain in return for each grain he plants. He expects multiples in return for his labors.

When the Israelites tried to grow food, it would not grow; it would be as if the wind had taken away the seed. If any of their crops did grow, they would not reap them; their enemies would enjoy them. Thus, their labors would be worthless. This passage reminds one of Gideon, who threshed the wheat in secret for fear that the Midianites would swoop down and take it from him (Judges 6).

The worship of idols is always unprofitable and always leads to destruction. All false religion is worthless!

So often it is heard that young folks are sowing wild oats, but it is stated in such a way as to suggest that it is no big deal. This suggests that such sowing will not have long-term effects. This passage and context clearly show the danger of sowing wild oats (any sin), because wild oats (like good grain) do indeed multiply when sown. There will be a day of harvest!

Hosea 8:8 “Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.”

“Israel is swallowed up: now are they among the nations as a vessel wherein none delighteth.” (ASV)

How were the people of Israel swallowed up? When they were conquered, they were dispersed among all the nations Assyria had already conquered. In this dispersion, they were not looked upon with favor by those among whom they were mingled. Tiglath-pileser III, conqueror of Israel, developed the policy of taking captured nations and spreading them out throughout his empire. This made it virtually impossible for rebellion to take hold in every area of that empire. Thus, it

can be seen how they became a swallowed-up nation, mingled with all the other “food” of the conqueror.

“A vessel wherein is no pleasure.”

This refers to a vessel which is unwanted and undesirable to those who see it. The Israelites had used themselves for dishonorable purposes and were now looked upon with disgust. This seems ever to be the treatment of the Jews, especially since Christ’s crucifixion.

“The most despised of those in servitude’ was the title given by the Roman historian to the Jews, while yet in their own land” (Pusey, p. 84).

A vessel is generally made to appeal to the senses of those who may purchase or use it. Israel is likened to one which no one wanted because of its ugliness.

“She had been worth just a little to her master in her role as a vassal nation, and now she was worth nothing, cast aside like a piece of cheap pottery” (Graham, p. 173).

“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

As mentioned above, down through time Israel has been basically perceived as a useless vessel, despised by the nations and treated with contempt since the time of the divided kingdom. She has since that time basically been scattered among the nations (There are more Jews in New York city than in Palestine.). Interestingly, this entire context shows that the Israelites brought this upon themselves. In the time of the

Messiah, they had the opportunity to rectify this situation, but instead they rejected GOD and His will again.

“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children”

(Matthew 27:24-25, emphasis mine, RK).

Hosea 8:9 “For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.”

“For they are gone up to Assyria, like a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.” (ASV)

Because Israel refused knowledge of GOD, she is compared to a **“wild ass.”**

“The pere, or wild ass of the East, is ‘heady, unruly, undisciplined, obstinate, running with swiftness far outstripping the swiftest horse, whither his lust, hunger, thirst, draw him without rule or direction, hardly to be turned aside from its intended course” (Pusey, p. 84).

Thus, Israel is portrayed as an obstinate people who are bent on doing whatever they want to do. Further, they were supposed to remain alone from the nations, totally dependent upon GOD for independence and safety. Unlike the wild ass which maintained its independence by remaining alone, Ephraim voluntarily gave up her independence through the alliances she made with the Gentile nations.

“The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Numbers 23:9).

“A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her” (Jeremiah 2:24).

“Ephraim hath hired lovers.” This phrase is easier to understand as translated in the NKJV — **“Ephraim has hired lovers.”** Israel sold herself to Assyria, but how did she do this? Through the tribute she paid Assyria for her friendship.

“An ordinary lewd woman practices adultery for the money she receives for it, but Israel was worse than such a woman. She is compared to an unfaithful wife who pays men to come in to her; and she pays them with money that her faithful husband had given her” (Zerr, p. 287).

“Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of My gold and of My silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them...thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom. And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is

given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary” (Ezekiel 16:17, 31-34).

Hosea 8:10 “Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.”

“Yea, though they hire among the nations, now will I gather them; and they begin to be diminished by reason of the burden of the king of princes.” (ASV)

The Israelites' attempted to buy friends who would help and protect them would prove to be of no value to them. GOD says, **“now will I gather them.”** The word **“gather”** means *“to grasp, i.e., collect.”* The very nations they thought could save them would be gathered against them. The people of Israel would then be scattered throughout the nations, where they have basically remained to this day — and this will never change as long as this world exists.

The phrase, **“and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes,”** seems to indicate a burden (a heavy load) which was placed on them by a king of princes for which they would be sorry. The ASV shows this king would cause Israel to be diminished. There are two distinct possibilities as to whom this prince was.

First, it must be considered that the prince is the king of Assyria. For years before the invasion and subsequent captivity of Ephraim, Assyria exacted tribute from Israel. This placed the people of Ephraim in the position of gradually depleting their wealth, weakening them, forcing them to realize that Assyria had control over them. If they did not wish to feel Assyria's wrath, they had to pay the tribute.

Second, this prince could be Menahem, king of Israel. Noticing Second Kings 15:19-20, one sees Pul (king of Assyria)

had come against the people of Israel, but Menahem paid him to leave them alone, and let himself remain king over Israel. This incident seems to be the beginning of their servitude to the Assyrians.

Note a similar warning to Judah in Ezekiel 16:37-41.

“Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.”

Hosea 8:11 **“Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.”**

“Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars for sinning, altars have been unto him for sinning.” (ASV)

GOD had given His people strict

instructions on where they were to bring their sacrifices (Deuteronomy 12:5ff) and how they were to worship Him. They were clearly told that they were to offer sacrifices **only to the one GOD**. Because they bowed to these false altars, such became sin to them. Instead of stopping sin as true religion should do, they multiplied sin to themselves. Because they bowed down to these altars, the time would come when they would be forced to bow to these altars even though they would then understand how evil it was to do such.

“Every act associated with the altar became sin — the act of sacrifice, the priests offering the sacrifices, the person bringing the sacrifice, and the eating of some of the offering” (Graham, p. 175).

Remember Daniel chapter three? There a great idolatrous image was made, and all of the people were required to bow down before it. The penalty for refusal to do so was death. But this was not the norm in Judah’s Babylonian captivity. Judah, as evidenced by Daniel and his three friends, was allowed to worship GOD without restriction except in this case and one later involving Daniel and the lion’s den. Again, in the Assyrian captivity, it appears Israel was forced to continue worshipping these false gods.

The only thing the Israelites had ever learned at these false altars was how to sin. Thus, every altar they erected was simply an additional sin. But so many of the altars had been erected that it was actually a multiplying (many altars) of sin against GOD and in their lives.

Hosea 8:12 **“I have written to him the great things of My law, but they were counted as a strange thing.”**

“I wrote for him the ten thousand things of My law; but they are counted as a strange thing.” (ASV)

STRANGE THING — zur — *“To press together, to press out, to bind up, to crush, to squeeze; to recede, to retreat, to turn away or aside; to be a stranger or foreigner, to be adulterous; to be estranged. Perhaps the root idea is that of deviating, nonacquaintance, or unrelatedness”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to be a stranger. The basic meaning of this word is to turn aside (particularly for lodging); therefore, it refers to being strange or foreign. It can mean to go astray, to be wayward. The participle is used frequently as an adjective, signifying something outside the law of God; a person outside the family; the estranged way Job’s guests and servants viewed him; hallucinations from drunkenness”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 286).

It is again emphasized that they could not plead ignorance to the charges being made against them. GOD had given them the law, but they had refused to listen to it. Not only had GOD given them the law, but He had also repeatedly sent messengers to reinforce and renew the law in their minds. But they refused it and treated it as if it had come from some strange outside influence. GOD had become a stranger to them.

“The idea conveyed is the numerous directions, perceptive and prohibitive, of the Pentateuch; the commandments, so full and explicit, comprehending alike the great things and the little; the details, so minute as well as manifold, that there was no possibility of mistake, provided there was any mind to be informed” (Given, p. 242).

In studies and conversations this writer has had with those who profess Christianity (denominations), the sentiments of this passage have often been confirmed. They are often unaware of what the Bible says in key areas and treat this “new knowledge” as something strange. The attitude often exhibited toward GOD’s Word is that it really

does not concern them that GOD’s Word contradicts their beliefs and practices. They have no excuse, nor can they plead ignorance — just like the Israelites of Hosea’s day.

What does the written word of GOD proclaim? Is it not the greatness of GOD Himself, the greatness of His plan for man’s redemption, the greatness of His great concern and care for His creation?

“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me...The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver” (Psalm 119:18-19, 72).

“Perhaps Israel felt the true Mosaic law was anachronistic, that is, out of date — ‘old fashioned.’ Good enough for their forefathers who lived rather primitive lives, but outdated for contemporary Israel. This is as modern as the twentieth century! Perhaps Israel felt the Mosaic law politically inexpedient. After all, a change in worship and priesthood was Jeroboam’s plan to instill national pride in the northern kingdom’s citizens. Perhaps Israel just didn’t want to keep the law because it was too binding and would not suit their miserable greed” (Butler, p. 521).

Oh, how the above paragraph fits the thinking of some in the church today in every detail. How often the plea is heard that **the church** must change to keep up with the times — instead, the times must change to accept the truth. How often today one is told he must not teach certain things because they are not politically correct — but sin is sin no matter what society says. But most of the time, many

simply do not want the restraints of GOD's laws interfering with their desires for the secular. To its shame today, the church in too many places tries to straddle the fence when it should take a firm stand on GOD's Word.

Hosea 8:13 **“They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of Mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will He remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.”**

“As for the sacrifices of Mine offerings, they sacrifice flesh and eat it; but Jehovah accepteth them not: now will He remember their iniquity, and visit their sins; they shall return to Egypt.” (ASV)

From past studies, the people were offering the sacrifices to their altars which should have been offered to GOD. It should be emphasized that an acceptable offering includes that which is offered, as well as the attitude of heart behind the offering. Here one sees that any sacrifices made specifically to Him at this time in Israel's history were being rejected by GOD. What would have been an acceptable sacrifice in the past was now spurned by GOD because of their gross iniquities. It is true that had GOD commanded sacrifices, and from those sacrifices there was a portion of the meat which the offerer was allowed to eat. Since GOD no longer accepted their sacrifices, the “so-called sacrifices” were really nothing more than the killing of animals for food. They went through the formalities of worship, but their actions were empty — worthless. They thought not to please GOD but their own selfish interests.

It was “**now**” time to pay for their sins, so GOD said, **“They shall return to Egypt.”** It is true that some of the people of Judah later fled to Egypt thinking they could escape punishment, but this passage is speaking of Israel, not Judah. This passage is not speaking of a literal return to Egypt —

it uses Egypt as a symbol of captivity. The people knew what their lot in Egypt had been — cruel, humiliating bondage. They had been freed from this bondage and warned not to forsake GOD, or they would be returned to it. Since their slavery was to be in Assyria, this “Egypt” must be looked upon as figurative language representing servitude. In essence, GOD is proclaiming the cancellation of His covenant with them because of their increasing rebellion to it.

All nations need to remember that they exist only as long as GOD permits them to exist. There is a point, a line of evil, that once crossed by any nation is a point of no return. Once this point is reached, destruction will follow.

Hosea 8:14 **“For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.”**

“For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and builded palaces; and Judah hath multiplied fortified cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the castles thereof.” (ASV)

PALACES — armon — *“This noun means a citadel, a fortress, or a fortified palace. It describes a fortified dwelling, usually a part of the royal area”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A masculine noun meaning fortress, citadel”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 98).

“They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not He thy father that hath bought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee” (Deuteronomy 32:5-6)?

The first part of the text appears to be a

summation of all which has been previously stated. Israel's current distress is caused and explained by one thought: **"Israel hath forgotten his Maker."**

"Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten GOD that formed thee"

(Deuteronomy 32:18).

How did the people of Israel show they had forgotten GOD? By the multiplying of temples of which there was supposed to be only one.

"It is quite inconvenient for people to remember God (his glory, power, might, and law) and simultaneously to stray in forbidden paths. Like the Gentiles of Romans 1, they must remove God from their knowledge in order to practice what God would forbid. Conscience will not long allow the other alternative — that is, to plunge headlong into sin while seeking earnestly to honor God" (Graham, p. 178).

A warning is again given to Judah through a simple statement of fact. Judah had begun following the same path as Israel in a failure to trust GOD. The people built fortified cities and considered them to be their source of strength against the foreign nations. The people of Judah would follow the example of their sister nation in forgetting their Maker, failing to consider His will when they made their plans. Destruction would then fall upon Judah as it was to fall upon Israel.

"It shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds" (Micah:5:10-11).

Notice the fulfillment of this prophecy concerning their fortified cities.

"Your country is desolate, your

cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:7-9).

"Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them" (2 Kings 18:13).

"In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away" (2 Kings 25:8-11).

Hosea Chapter Nine

Hosea 9:1 “Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy GOD, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.”

“Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, like the peoples; for thou hast played the harlot, departing from thy GOD; thou hast loved hire upon every grain-floor.” (ASV)

The Israelites thought they had security because of their alliances and the crops they harvested. But this was a false security based on the fact that they could not see the foreign armies marching toward them. Hosea basically told them this was not a time for partying, but rather a time to mourn and repent. On the other hand, the nations around them were not facing

impending judgement, so they could rejoice for a time.

The “**other people**” could only refer to the Gentile nations which surrounded them. These people rejoiced in their prosperity, attributing such to their idols — they did this in ignorance.

But, Israel knew better than to attribute the crop blessings to idols. They had intentionally left GOD to serve idols, therefore guilt feelings would always be in the back of their minds, dulling their sense of joy. Their unfaithfulness was like a wife who left her mate for financial gain — traitorous. Jeremiah shows a similar picture of unfaithfulness in the times of Judah.

“As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil” (Jeremiah 44:16-17).

The phrase, “**thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor**” speaks to their not only attributing the harvest to the Baal but also the immorality often associated with these harvest feasts. Plentiful harvests were attributed by their heathen neighbors as coming from the fertility gods. Thus, these pagan feasts were surrounded with immorality.

Hosea 9:2 “The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.”

“The threshing-floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail

her.” (ASV)

Because Israel had sold herself to the gods of the world and abused the blessings GOD had given her, these blessings would cease. The threshing floor and wine press cannot literally feed anyone. What this shows is crop failure. If nothing is going into the threshing floors and wine presses, nothing can come out of them.

“It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy GOD, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out” (Deuteronomy 28:15-19).

The land would become barren. This barrenness could come about from many causes — drought, pestilence or removal of the people from the land.

Hosea 9:3 “They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.”

“They shall not dwell in Jehovah's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria.” (ASV)

The land occupied by the Israelites was not their land — it, like the whole earth, is GOD's land! Canaan had been specifically given to them for their **use**, much like the

way people lease property today. As long as the people of Israel abode by the terms of the lease, they could continue to use the property. Once they broke the lease, then their right to use it was terminated. The ten northern tribes would no longer be welcome to live in the land.

“The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me” (Leviticus 25:23).

“If thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it” (Deuteronomy 20:17-18).

Man must understand that he owns nothing in this world — he is but a steward of GOD's blessings!

The term **“Egypt”** is clearly shown to be interchangeable with the word **“Assyria”** and is thus used to signify the bondage in which they would soon find themselves. It further describes the kind of bondage they would suffer, for in Egypt the bondage was exceedingly severe. This is borne out by the statement that Ephraim **“shall eat unclean things in Egypt.”** The northern tribes had been born as part of a nation in Egypt and would die as a nation in bondage.

One of the marks which identified Israel as being GOD's people was the set of dietary restrictions placed upon them (Deuteronomy 14:4-20). Certain foods were proclaimed by GOD to be unclean and thus

forbidden to them. Apparently, while in Assyrian captivity, they were not going to have any choice in what they ate; they would have to eat the unclean foods. Would this be because of necessity or restraint — or both?

“The LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them” (Ezekiel 4:13).

Later, when the people of Judah went into captivity they were not forced to eat the unclean thing (Daniel 1:8-16).

Hosea 9:4 “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.”

“They shall not pour out wine-offerings to Jehovah, 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 shall be for their appetite; it shall not come into the house of Jehovah.” (ASV)

“The wine or drink-offering was annexed to all their burnt-offerings, and so to all their public sacrifices. The burnt-offering (and with it the meal and wine-offering,) was the daily morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. 29:38-41; Num. 28:3-8), and the sacrifice of the Sabbath (Num. 28:9). It was offered, together with the sin-offering, on the first of the month, the Passover, the feast of the first-fruits, of trumpets, of tabernacles, and the day of Atonement, besides the special sacrifices of that day (Num. 28:11, 15-16, 19, 22, 26-27, 30). The

drink-offering accompanied also the peace-offering (Num. 15:8, 10)" (Pusey, p. 89).

Since the wine offering was connected to most of their sacrifices, this meant that all of their sacrifices would end. Again, those who attempted to offer them would find their offerings unacceptable ("**neither shall they be pleasing**").

"It is human nature, to neglect to serve God, when He wills it, and then to attempt to serve Him when He forbids it" (Pusey, p. 90).

What did the Israelites do in the wilderness when they believed the report of the ten false spies? They refused to go into the land and take it as GOD had ordered. When GOD then forbade them from going in, what did they do? They tried-with destructive consequences to take the land (Numbers 14).

"The bread of mourners" is the bread which was eaten when a person died. Hosea not only went on to liken their sacrifices to that bread, but also said, **"all that eat thereof shall be polluted."** To gain the significance of this, one must study the laws concerning the uncleanness of a dead body.

"He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law, when a man dieth in a

tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean" (Numbers 19:11-15).

From the above passage it is learned that (1) Anyone touching a dead body was considered unclean. (2) Those touching dead bodies must go through purification or else be cut off from Israel. (3) The uncleanness of a dead body was both in a dwelling place where the body was found (private) and in public. The tent and everything in it became unclean for seven days. Anyone who entered the tent became unclean. If one ate the food of those who mourned, one became unclean. In the unclean condition, one could not worship. This may simply be likening Israel to a dead house wherein everything is unclean.

GOD demanded sacrifices from His people, but their religion had become as something dead, without life, without true meaning. Instead of offering sacrifices to GOD, they took what would normally be offered to Him and used it for their own personal appetites. An alternative thought here is that such food could satisfy the physical appetite but could not be offered to GOD — it did not satisfy the spiritual appetite as pure worship would have.

Why would they not be able to offer these sacrifices to GOD? Because GOD had set one place as the only acceptable place for them to be made — the Temple in Jerusalem. While living in Canaan, they possessed the freedom to go to Jerusalem and offer acceptable worship — but they refused to go. In captivity, they would not be able to go to Jerusalem, nor apparently would their captors allow them to worship.

Hosea 9:5 **"What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the**

LORD?"

"What will ye do in the day of solemn assembly, and in the day of the feast of Jehovah?" (ASV)

SOLEMN — moed — "An appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand)" (Strong's, CD); "Congregation, festive gathering; appointment, signal. Derived from yaM'adh, moM'eMdh often designates a determined time or place without any regard for the purpose. Since the Jewish festivals occurred at regular intervals, this word becomes closely identified with them" (Zodhiates, CD); "A masculine noun meaning an appointed time or place. It can signify an appointed meeting time in general; a specific appointed time, usually for a sacred feast or festival" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 582).

FEAST — hag — "It means festival or feast. The main idea was the celebration of a holiday. This noun usually refers to the three main festivals of Israel which required a pilgrimage: the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. These were seasons of religious joy" (Zodhiates, CD); "A noun meaning a feast, a festival. This word is used numerous times throughout the Old Testament referring to the feasts of the Hebrew religious calendar. It is used of the major feasts, including the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover Feast; the Feast of Weeks; and the Feast of Tabernacles" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 312).

What would they do when the feast days came around? They would not be able to enjoy any of these days, because they could not celebrate them. Those who might desire to keep these feasts days would be grieved,

because to do so would be a violation of the Law of Moses. Normally GOD's people would look with anticipation to these times of celebration, but now their passing could only bring sorrow to a nation in bondage.

"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts" (Hosea 2:11).

Can anyone claiming to be a Jew, and claiming to follow the Law of Moses today celebrate any of the Jewish feast days of the Old Testament? Can he celebrate the sabbath day? The answer is no! Why? Because he has no Temple at which to worship. No wonder that in His providence GOD had the Roman soldiers destroy the Temple with all its records of lineage. Without proof of lineage, no Jew can serve as a priest.

No Temple — no acceptable worship.

No priests — no acceptable worship.

It is really that simple.

Hosea 9:6 **"For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles."**

"For, lo, they are gone away from destruction; yet Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them; their pleasant things of silver, nettles shall possess them; thorns shall be in their tents." (ASV)

Among the commentators, there are two lines of thought as to what these verses mean. First, because of their fear of invading forces, some would flee to Egypt for safety. Instead of finding safety, they would find death.

"Memphis, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt, the ruins of which are to be seen on the western bank of

the Nile, to the south of Old Cairo. The second name of this city was Haka-ptah, i.e., house of the worship of Phtah” (Kiel, p. 122).

“It (Memphis, RK) was at this time the capital of Egypt, whose idols God threatens. Its name, ‘the dwelling place of Phta,’ the Greek Vulcan, marked it, as a seat of idolatry; and in it was the celebrated court of Apis the original of Jeroboam’s calf. There in the home of the idol for whom they forsook their God, they should be gathered for burial” (Pusey, p. 90).

Second, Egypt still represents captivity, and Memphis stood for a burying place for the dead. Those taken into captivity would be buried in the land of that captivity. None were coming back. Coffman states that Memphis was the site of the largest cemetery in Egypt (p. 158).

Is it not interesting that in the wilderness the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt where only bondage and death awaited them (Numbers 14)? Here the symbolism of Egypt and Memphis are used to show they were returning to bondage and death. Only, this time it would be in Assyria.

The word “**tabernacle**” in the Scriptures refers to a dwelling place. The context of each passage must determine its particular use. It can refer to a religious building, a common building, or even a person. In this passage, it refers to their dwelling places which had once been beautiful and pleasant but would now become places of desolation fit only for the beasts of the earth. When nettles and thorns take over a place, it shows complete desolation.

One can only imagine the Israelites as they were led away by Assyria. When they looked back, they saw their homes and cities utterly destroyed. When they looked ahead, they saw heartache in the form of slavery. This writer cannot help being

reminded of the words of Jesus.

“What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matthew 16:26)?

Considering this, imagine the day of judgment and those who have become Christians but then turned away from GOD. Looking back, will they not see lives of destruction and ahead only misery in eternal slavery to Satan?

Hosea 9:7 “The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.”

“The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the man that hath the spirit is mad, for the abundance of thine iniquity, and because the enmity is great.” (ASV)

VISITATION — pequddah — *“The basic meaning is intervention by a superior power (usually God or a king) in order to bring about a great change in the situation of a subordinate. There may be an implied desire to help to injure the object, depending on the context” (Zodhiates, CD); “A feminine noun meaning an arrangement, an office, an officer, accounting. The root idea is something that is attended to or set in order...Most often the word means accounting and refers to a time of accounting when God attended to people’s actions, usually to call them to account for their sins” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 913).*

RECOMPENCE — sillum — *“It is a requital, retribution, recompense, or a reward” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning a requital, a retribution...In context, this noun is used as God’s*

punishment of Israel for their repeated disobedience (Isaiah 34:8; Hosea 9:7). It is not something given on a whim but is deserved” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1145).

INIQUITY — *awon* — “A depraved action, perversity, perverseness, sin, guilt, a crime, a fault, iniquity, mischief; punishment, the penalty of; suffering, misery” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning iniquity, evil, guilt, punishment. This is one of the four main words indicating sin in the Old Testament. This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrongdoing” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 814).

The days of visitation and recompence were the days when GOD would visit them with wrath through the instrumentality of the Assyrian conquerors. The people of Israel would remember the warnings they had received from GOD’s true prophets when the destruction began.

“The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad.” This does not speak of the true prophet of GOD, though the people probably looked upon them as such. Those who faithfully teach GOD’s Word in any generation are commonly thought of as fools by the worldly. Instead, this passage speaks of the false prophets as evidenced by the context. These false prophets had opposed the prophets of GOD by declaring the claims of impending destruction were not going to happen. The false prophets were the fools and mad men, because they opposed the will of GOD.

“As he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness” (Acts

26:24-25).

“Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication” (2 Kings 9:11, spoken about Elisha).

“Many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him” (John 10:20, Jews speaking of Christ)?

The false prophet was the blind leading the blind, and both he and his follower would fall into the ditch of destruction. These false prophets spoke of peace and prosperity, but when the people saw the destruction, they would know they had not been speaking for GOD. By speaking this way, the false prophets were actually encouraging the people to commit more sin. It is the same today when supposedly educated men say “alternate lifestyles” (homosexuality) are not sin; or that abortion is not murder, et cetera. These advocates lead people to and in sin and destruction.

“For the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.” This is the reason for the days of visitation which were to fall upon Israel. The people’s iniquities and hatreds were not few in number, but rather great in multitude. The visitation of punishment was deserved. Many do not seem to realize the refusal to do as GOD has directed means that they hate GOD.

“This is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

“This is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye

should walk in it” (2 John 6).

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Question: What is the opposite of love? Would it not be, *“If ye hate Me, ye will not keep My commandments?”* The next time one considers violating a command of GOD, let him remember that to do so is to despise the will of GOD and to show hatred for Him and divine things.

“The sinner first neglects God; then, as the will of God is brought before him, he wilfully disobeys Him; then, when, he finds God’s Will irreconcilably at variance with his own, or when God chastens him, he hates Him, and (the Prophet speaks out plainly) hates Him greatly” (Pusey, p. 92).

Hosea 9:8 “The watchman of Ephraim was with my GOD: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his GOD.”

“Ephraim was a watchman with my GOD: as for the prophet, a fowler’s snare is in all his ways, and enmity in the house of his GOD.” (ASV)

The role of a watchman is very obvious. He was on “guard duty” against any enemy who might try to attack the camp. In the spiritual sense, the word indicates one who would listen to GOD’s words and warn the people against the Devil and his servants, one who would warn against false doctrine.

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me” (Ezekiel 3:17, also see Ezekiel 33:7).

“I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not

hearken” (Jeremiah 6:17).

The question becomes, “Who is the **“watchman”** of this verse — a true prophet or a false prophet?”

“Was Ephraim a ‘watchman with my God’ or ‘against my God,’ as in the margin (ASV)? The use of my God and his God indicates that Ephraim was a spy or watchman against God and that his (Ephraim’s) prophets were a snare in the way of the people. In the house of his god he was an enemy to the true God” (Hailey, p. 165).

It is this writer’s position that the first part of the verse in question refers to a true prophet of GOD and that the second part of the verse refers to the false prophet. If this position is correct, it then is a comparison of the two.

GOD’s people had not been content with His revelations to them. Therefore, they took to themselves false prophets (teachers), heeding their advice and ignoring GOD’s messengers and their message. The people desired to be deceived, to follow their own course, so they chose teachers who would tell them what they wanted to hear.

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof” (Jeremiah 5:31)?

“I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they

heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:1-4, emphasis mine, RK).

When people wish to be deceived in any age, there will always be those who are willing to oblige them. These false teachers teach their damnable doctrines because of a basic hatred of GOD and His doctrine. By opposing GOD, they instill a hatred of GOD in those who listen to and agree with them. Because the people would not listen to GOD’s Word, they became ensnared in the lies of the false prophets. This is true in any generation, yes, even today.

“Rather than doubt the inspiration of the lying prophets, however, the people of Hosea’s day believed their lies to be divinely inspired. People today are the same; they crave extra-Biblical pronouncements, accept them uncritically, and are deceived” (Phillips, p. 57).

Hosea 9:9 “They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore He will remember their iniquity, He will visit their sins.”

“They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: He will remember their iniquity, He will visit their sins.” (ASV)

CORRUPTED — sahat — “To decay; to mar; to destroy, devastate; to ruin” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to spoil, to ruin, to destroy, to pervert, to corrupt, to become corrupt, to wipe out” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1124).

“They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah.” In Judges nineteen and twenty, the account of the Levite is found. He was traveling from Bethlehem-judah to the “**house of the Lord.**” Toward evening he stopped at Gibeah for shelter. The men of the city

surrounded the house where he was staying and demanded that he be sent forth so they could “**know him**” (sodomize him). The Levite’s concubine was given to them and they abused her all night, resulting in her death. When Israel as a whole demanded justice, the tribe of Benjamin condoned the sin of homosexuality by refusing to turn these men over for their just punishment. The people had sunk to these depths of deprivation because they refused to obey GOD. Morally, Ephraim had become another Sodom and Gomorrah.

There was another incident with regard to Gibeah which should be observed. In Gibeah Saul was named as king over Israel, because Israel refused to follow GOD’s Word. They had been warned that GOD was to be their only king, but they wanted to be like all the nations around them. The seeds of this event would eventually lead to a divided kingdom and the loss of the northern tribes. It is left to the reader to decide which event he believes is the incident referred to by Hosea — maybe both of them combined.

The text says they corrupted themselves. Looking at the above definitions, this means they caused their own decay and devastation or ruin. Anytime man chooses to follow his own path, refusing to follow GOD’s directions, he has no one to blame but himself when punishment comes.

“Therefore He will remember their iniquity, He will visit their sins.” Ephraim’s present sins being compared to the sins of Gibeah shows they had become totally corrupt. No doubt Gibeah thought things were going along rather smoothly; they had allies for their crimes and were even allowed to defeat their foes on the first two days of battle. But GOD knew their transgressions, and He was not going to allow them to go unpunished. When the time of retribution came, the whole tribe

was almost exterminated. So it was with Israel in this text. The only ones who would escape Assyrian captivity were those who left the northern tribes when idolatry was introduced by Jeroboam and went south to Jerusalem to worship and serve GOD correctly.

Hosea 9:10 “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.”

“I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig-tree at its first season: but they came to Baal-peor, and consecrated themselves unto the shameful thing, and became abominable like that which they loved.” (ASV)

ABOMINATIONS — *siquus* — “*The meaning is a disgusting thing, a filthy thing; an abomination, an idol, a detestable thing. The word is used to refer to idols themselves or anything associated with idolatrous practices. Because idol worshipers are wholly identified with idols, they too are detestable*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A masculine noun meaning a detestable thing, an abomination, and an idol. This Hebrew word identifies an object that is abhorrent or blasphemous. It is used to denote filth; forbidden food; and a blasphemous activity. Most often, it is used as a synonym for an idol or idolatry*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1193).

GOD goes back to the very beginning of Israel’s history, which began with — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These were some of the finest examples of faithful men which may be found in the Scriptures. He refers to these ancestors as being like refreshing fruit found in a deserted place, a wilderness.

“**But they went to Baalpeor**” is not a reference to the above mentioned

forefathers, but rather to their descendants. This incident took place shortly after Israel left the wilderness and was preparing to enter the promised land of Canaan. GOD had cared for the people and had blessed them during all those years of wandering. But when they came in contact with the heathen nations, it was not long until they left GOD for idols.

“The illustration supposes a man finding a fruit thus growing wild, uncultivated and producing inferior fruit. He takes charge of the plant, cultivating it and making it possible to produce better fruit. But instead of doing that, it produces worse crops than it had in the beginning. Likewise, after God took Israel under His care, the nation was cultivated and given the opportunity to produce the desirable kind of fruit, namely, true religious devotion to the Lord. But instead of doing so, the nation began to bear the fruit of idolatry” (Zerr, p. 288).

Their turning to Baalpeor is probably a reference to Numbers 25:1-9. This was the same place where Balaam blessed Israel (Numbers 23:28). It will be remembered from the context of that account that the king of Moab had hired Balaam to curse Israel. But every time he tried to do so, GOD only allowed him to bless Israel. But Balaam, though not able to curse GOD’s people, did give him the advice which ultimately led to their downfall. The following is the Bible’s account of what happened after Balaam’s counsel was given.

“Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And

Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand” (Numbers 25:1-9).

The term “**Baalpeor**” would literally be translated as “*Baal of Peor,*” i.e., they worship Baal at the place of Peor. The ancients believed each locality had its own gods, and when one moved to another place, he would need to worship the god of that place. Unger’s Bible Dictionary says that the name Baalpeor “*is probably another form of Chemosh*” (p. 413). These gods were served and worshipped with the most immoral acts. Their temples were often stocked with religious prostitutes — both

male and female.

At Baalpeor, Israel separated herself from serving GOD to serve Baal. This was counted to her as great shame, because the god himself was totally shameful. Further, the text says Israel’s conduct at that time was an “abomination” (disgusting, filthy). Why did so many in Israel do this? Because “**their abominations were according as they loved,**” i.e., because they loved to do it. People often become like what they idealize.

“The object which the will desires and loves, transfuses its own goodness or badness into it” (Author Unknown, Quoted by Butler, p. 531).

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

“They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them (idols, RK)” (Psalm 115:8).

“Man first makes his god like his own corrupt self, or to some corruption in himself, and then, worshipping this ideal of his own, he becomes the more corrupt through copying that corruption” (Pusey, p. 94).

Hosea 9:11 “As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.”

“As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird: there shall be no birth, and none with child, and no conception.” (ASV)

GLORY — kabod — “*It means weight, honor, esteem, glory, majesty; abundance, wealth*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*A masculine*

singular noun meaning honor, glory, majesty, wealth" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 493).

Next to salvation, the greatest gift GOD has bestowed upon man is children.

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).

The name Ephraim means "double fruitfulness," and that fruitfulness had been predicted in Genesis 48:19 and Deuteronomy 33:17. In fact, GOD promised the Israelites fruitfulness as a reward for obedience to Him, but His promise was conditional (Leviticus 26). As long as they faithfully served Him, they had all they needed and more. But now they had turned their backs on GOD, and He was going to take their glory from them — just as He promised.

"Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Proverbs 23:5).

Notice the three stages of life represented in this passage. They all deal with the beginnings of human life as man thinks of them. The fruit spoken of in this passage is children, as evidenced by the next verse. Children are a great blessing from GOD to mankind, and especially was this true of the Jews who looked for the Messiah. They knew the Messiah was coming through a woman and thus considered it a reproach to be barren (Samuel and John's mothers).^{*} Now GOD said He would make Israel's women barren; He would cause their fertility to fly away like a swift bird. Conception would be taken

away, and those who did conceive would lose their children in the womb or at the time of birth. The irony of this should be evident. Israel had turned to the fertility gods of Baal for conception, but GOD showed Baal could do nothing for them by taking away the fruitfulness of the womb. What they sought they could not find, because they sought it at the wrong source.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

^{*}Elkanah was Samuel's father. He had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Hannah was barren and sorrowed much over this fact (1 Samuel 1:1-28). Notice the gladness of heart expressed by Hannah after she presented Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel 2:1-11). The father of John was Zacharias; his mother was Elizabeth. Elizabeth considered her barrenness to be a reproach (Luke 1:25). This chapter should be considered carefully concerning John's conception, birth, and the reaction to his birth.

Hosea 9:12 "Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!"

"Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, so that not a man shall be left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!" (ASV)

BEREAVE — sakol — "A verb meaning to be bereft of (children), deprived of (children)" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1138).

This passage is a continuation of the tragedy of the former verse. The children who were conceived, carried in the womb, and delivered would lose their lives. That this was not a total destruction to all

childbearing can be seen in the woe placed on those who lived.

The people of Israel took pride in their numbers as well as in their other physical blessings. GOD had promised Abraham offspring which could not be numbered for multitude, yet GOD had warned them regarding the depletion of these offspring if they became disobedient.

“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD...ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy GOD” (Deuteronomy 28:58, 62).

How is it that the young who survived the womb would be diminished or taken from them? Through the sword — war.

“The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs” (Deuteronomy 32:25).

Assyrians were a very cruel, especially when it came to subjugating a captured people. They made captured people obey them through terror and fear. An example of this regards the wholesale slaughter of women and children. They would take a child out of its mother’s arms, swing it by the heels, and crush its head on the ground in front of the mother. There were other atrocities which they committed along the same lines with pregnant women.

The departure of GOD from man is truly the worst thing which could ever happen to him. What can man expect in such a condition? Turning from GOD means that the special blessings He may have provided will be removed. Destruction comes when GOD departs — life is not as good as it was

with GOD.

“Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our GOD is not among us” (Deuteronomy 31:17)?

Hosea 9:13 **“Ephraim, as I saw Tyre, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.”**

“Ephraim, like as I have seen Tyre, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring out his children to the slayer.” (ASV)

PLEASANT PLACE — naweh — “A masculine noun depicting a shepherd’s abode. a camp; a flock. It refers to any place of habitation, natural or man-made” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 715).

At one time, Tyre had been a flourishing city of trade. It was built on an island of about one square mile in size and was one of the principal cities of the Old Testament (Joshua 19:20). But Tyre was doomed to eventual destruction (Ezekiel 26:3). At the height of its power, Tyre baffled Nebuchadnezzar, who tried for thirteen years to capture it to no avail. During this time, his soldiers became bald and their shoulders peeled, because they had to constantly keep their battle gear on (Ezekiel 29:18). Even Alexander the Great had trouble defeating this city until he built a long cause-way out to the island. As strong as this city once was, today it is nothing but a flat place where no one lives — just as the prophecy declared it would be.

The connection between Ephraim and Tyre seems to be their locations. Tyre, for

hundreds of years, had been a place of safety; no enemy could scale her walls. Ephraim, too, had been placed in a location of safety by GOD. He put His protective wall around her which no enemy could breach. Tyre had grown rich and powerful, and with GOD's protection Ephraim became rich and powerful. But, like the city of Tyre, Ephraim was doomed to destruction because she turned away from GOD. Instead of prospering, her children were to be murdered by their enemies (Assyria). Once strong and numerous, both were brought to lowliness. As Tyre would be reduced to a barren place — uninhabited, so Israel would be reduced to a place fit only as a dwelling place for animals, and the nation would never return as a nation again.

In studying the book of Hosea, one of the things which should stand out is the fact that too often those who are blessed by GOD misuse their blessings and end in destruction. Both Tyre and Ephraim had been blessed, yet both became heavily involved in Baal worship and ended in destruction.

Hosea 9:14 “Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.”

“Give them, O Jehovah - what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.” (ASV)

The prophet may be making a request for mercy. The context has just said that the children would be raised up only to be killed by the enemy, i.e., in battle. The prophet seems to state it would have been better not to carry the fruit of the womb to maturity, than to raise them only to be killed by the enemy. Further, when considering the methods the Assyrians used to kill infants, it would be more merciful to the mothers to be barren.

“From ‘double fruit’ to ‘double barrenness’ was now to be their lot”

(Hailey, p. 167).

Again, the significance is that GOD caused Israel's population to be diminished because of its sins. Interestingly, there is similar language in the New Testament regarding the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans.

“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” (Luke 23:29).

Hosea 9:15 “All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of Mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers.”

“All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I hated them: because of the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of My house; I will love them no more; all their princes are revolvers.” (ASV)

For comments on the previous blessings rendered at Gilgal, look under Hosea 4:15 of this commentary. Gilgal turned from a place of honor and blessings to a place of curses because of the idolatry which was sanctioned there. Israel's wickedness was typified by the proceedings at Gilgal — the whole nation was given to the same sins.

Note the word **“hate.”** It is generally thought that this word, or the emotions of hate, is something which should be avoided at all cost. This text shows an example of **“hate”** which is right, for GOD can do no wrong. The evil actions and thoughts of the people were the things GOD hated and the basis upon which He cut them off. The key is to hate the actions of mankind, but not to hate the person. This is often a hard lesson for man to learn and practice.

“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your

wrath” (Ephesians 4:6).

Because of their wickedness, GOD will drive them out of His house. This is the same fate as that of the Canaanites, who were driven out of the land by Israel for their abominations. The same sins Israel was engaging in would yield the same result — driven from the land. The word **“house”** is representative of a dwelling place. By driving the people out of the land through captivity, He was driving them from His presence. Driven out of the house signified the loss of the covenant blessings — the loss of inheritance. Remember how this book began? Two of the children were named Lo-ruhamah (no mercy) and Lo-ammi (not my people). Later, historical Judah would receive the same fate as historical Israel. When would this be? When Jesus was nailed to the cross and His kingdom was set in place at Pentecost. They rejected the Messiah, and the end result was destruction at the hands of Rome’s army — no mercy and not My people. **Today the Israel of GOD, His chosen people, is the church (Galatians 6:16)**. Christians who read this, are you thinking?

As noticed before, all the princes of Israel are called wicked (Hosea 8:4). None of Israel’s kings are listed in the Bible as being good. They are **always** listed as being evil idolaters. They had purposely turned against GOD, therefore they are listed as revolters. Let it be remembered that their sin was not one of ignorance, but was committed openly and defiantly.

Hosea 9:16 **“Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.”**

“Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay the beloved fruit of their womb.” (ASV)

The play on the word **“Ephraim”** has been made throughout this chapter. Remember that this word means *“double fruit.”* Ephraim has gone from double fruit to no fruit. His root is dried up. A root dried up indicates the death of the plant, never more to gain vitality. Those born would be killed, and the people who watched these loved ones die would probably say it would have been better if they had never been born.

Hosea 9:17 **“My GOD will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.”**

“My GOD will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations.” (ASV)

Note that Hosea refers to GOD as **his GOD**, which implies He was not Ephraim’s GOD. The people had given up the right to be called the children of GOD — to call Him Father. Therefore, the prophet says that his GOD will cast them away. This is going back to the imagery of an adulterous woman being driven from her husband’s house.

Further, part of their punishment is that they will be wanderers among the nations. In other words, they will never again be a united people. Look around — the Jewish people are scattered all over the world, just as GOD promised. This will never change, much to the disappointment of the millennial doctrines common among so many denominations.

“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD...It shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you;

so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind”
(Deuteronomy 28:58, 63-65).

What a warning this should be to Christians. GOD cast away His people because of their idolatry then, and He will cast them away today for the same reason. Most Christians would never carve an image and bow down before it. But how many today have their idols of popularity, wealth, power, sports, television, et cetera. Let him that hath ears to hear, hear the divine warning.

Hosea Chapter Ten

Hosea 10:1 “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.”

“Israel is a luxuriant vine, that putteth forth his fruit: according to the abundance of his fruit he hath multiplied his altars; according to the goodness of their land they have made goodly pillars.” (ASV)

EMPTY — *baqaq* — This verb is used in two different ways. *“To empty; lay waste; be laid waste...A verb meaning to grow or be luxuriant”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 159).

IMAGES — *massebah* — *“Literally, it is something which is stationed, i.e., a column, a pillar, a memorial stone, a monument, a statue (usually of idols); a stump, a trunk...This is the only Hebrew word which is translated “pillar” which has any religious importance”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine noun meaning something set upright. The word most often refers to a standing, unhewn block or stone utilized for religious and memorial purposes...Many times in 2*

Kings, the term refers to a sacred pillar that aided people in their worship of pagan gods, especially the Canaanite god Baal. In most of these passages, the sacred columns were used by Israelites, contrary to the Lord’s prohibition concerning the worship of any other god” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 652).

“Israel is an empty vine,” i.e., *“Israel is a vine laid waste.”* Originally Israel had been brought from Egypt and “planted” in Canaan as a healthy, productive vine. This vine should have produced righteous fruit which would honor GOD.

“Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river” (Psalm 80:8-11).

Instead of producing righteous fruit, Israel put out foliage which said she was fruitful. Her true condition can be likened to the fig tree which Jesus cursed.

“When He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away” (Matthew 21:19).

The fruit Israel produced was idolatry through the worship of images. She may have looked like a healthy nation, but looks are deceiving.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of

dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:27-28).

What did the people do with the many blessings GOD gave them? Instead of using them to His glory, they used them to multiply idols and glorify themselves through those altars. They used these blessings selfishly. Let it be emphasized throughout this context that GOD did not condemn them for having wealth. After all, He had provided them with their wealth. What He condemned then and today is the misuse of the wealth which one has. This raises an interesting question for Christians to consider: *“How are we using the wealth GOD has provided us?” Do we use it to promote and grow His kingdom or selfishly to provide ourselves with more and more stuff? Do we do as Ananias and Sapphira did (Acts 5) in deceiving themselves that no one would know what they did and lie about what we do with the many blessings GOD has given?*

Hosea 10:2 “Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: He shall break down their altars, He shall spoil their images.”

“Their heart is divided; now shall they be found guilty: He will smite their altars, He will destroy their pillars.” (ASV)

SPOIL — *sadad* — *“To be burly; to be powerful; to ravage, destroy”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to be burley, to ravage, to destroy, to oppress, to assault, to spoil, to lay waste, to devastate. The primary meaning of the word is to devastate or to destroy”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1104).

Their hearts were divided between their idols and GOD, much like the days of Elijah when the people could not decide whether to worship Baal or GOD. Remember the

question Elijah asked them?

“How long halt ye between two opinions” (1 Kings 18:21)?

“How long go ye limping between the two sides?” (ASV)

“How long will you falter between two opinions?” (NKJV)

Elijah understood that the people could not remain in such a divided condition and be pleasing to GOD. They needed to make up their minds and not be **“tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”** (Ephesians 4:14). GOD has never accepted partial or divided service, and He never will.

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and mammon” (Luke 16:13).

“He shall break down their altars.”

The word **“break”** literally means to *“break the neck”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 874). GOD is going to break the necks of their images, causing them to die to Israel.

“When they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him” (1 Samuel 5:4).

The word **“He”** is emphatic, meaning **He Himself** is going to do the destroying. They may attribute their destruction to their enemies, but GOD is the force behind their conquering enemies.

“It should be clear to all that God reaches a time when his love for

righteousness, and his corresponding hatred for evil, compels him to punish those violators of his will who have obstinately refused to respond to his love. The wrath of God is based upon this dual foundation” (Graham, p. 197).

Hosea 10:3 “For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?”

“Surely now shall they say, We have no king; for we fear not Jehovah; and the king, what can he do for us?” (ASV)

FEARED — yare — “*To be afraid; to fear, revere; to be feared; to be dreadful; to be revered; to terrify, make afraid. There are two main types of fear described by yaMreM: (a) the emotion and intellectual anticipation of harm, what one feels may go wrong for him; (b) a very positive feeling of awe or reverence for God, which may be expressed in piety or formal worship”* (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to fear, to respect, to reverence, to be afraid, to be awesome, to be feared, to make afraid, to frighten”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 470).

When Israel’s heart became divided, for what did the people ask? A secular king like all the nations around them. In other words, “*Let a human being rule over us instead of GOD.*” But now the time has come when the disasters predicted by GOD are coming to pass. Now, what good is the king they wanted to protect them and lead them? The king has led them into idolatry to the point that GOD has washed His hands of them. This human king cannot protect them against the Assyrian forces. Neither can they rely upon their true King to deliver them, for they have been divorced from Him because of their rebellion and adultery (serving the false gods). They would not reverence (fear) GOD so now they must suffer the consequences. This is true of any

people in any nation.

“Puppet kings and puppet gods are helpless to save in time of need” (Hailey, p. 168).

Note — they understood that the Lord was no longer acting as their king (protector and nourisher) because they did not fear the Lord.

“To fear Jehovah is to reverence Him, and to reverence Him is to serve Him” (Hailey, p. 168).

In their captivity, they would truly learn what a mistake they had made in turning from GOD to lean upon human thinking. As America turns further and further away from GOD and godliness, as Americans “think” they can solve all of their problems through human reasoning and legislation, how long will it be before GOD gives up this once god-fearing nation?

The point is that they forsook GOD, so they could not rely upon Him to help them, and the king they had wanted was powerless to save them. If there is not a central authority governing, then all that is left is anarchy, and that was indeed the situation in the latter days of Israel’s existence.

Hosea 10:4 “They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.”

“They speak vain words, swearing falsely in making covenants: therefore judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.” (ASV)

SWEARING — alah — “*To swear, to make a solemn oath. This verb is used in expressing solemn oaths among men and between God and man”* (Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to curse, to put under oath. It is used in many cases of persons bringing curses on themselves if they are guilty of doing wrong”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 52).

JUDGEMENT — mispat — “Properly, a verdict (whether favorable or unfavorable) which was pronounced judicially, a judgment, a sentence, a formal decree; justice, right, privilege; place of judgment; cause, suit; crime, guilt; law, rule, ordinance, custom, manner; what is due” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning a judgment, a legal decision, a legal case, a claim, proper, rectitude” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 687).

HEMLOCK — ros — “A masculine noun meaning poison, bitterness, gall. It refers to something that is a life-threatening substance” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1026); “Any of several poisonous herbs (as a poison hemlock or a water hemlock) of the carrot family having finely cut leaves and small white flowers b: a drug or lethal drink prepared from the poison hemlock” (Webster, CD).

“They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant.” The Israelites had gotten to a point that their words were useless — had no meaning. They made covenants with each other and with the nations around them — never meaning to hold up their end of the bargain. They would make agreements with someone as long as it appeared they would profit from it, but at the slightest inconvenience or loss, they would break them. They did the same thing with regard to their promises to GOD.

“Thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.” Hemlock is a bitter, poisonous, herb which can grow to heights of four to six feet, depending upon the variety considered. The verdict (judgment) which was about to fall upon the Israelites was rendered by themselves — it would be bitter to take and deadly — like hemlock. The people had poisoned their souls by preparing the soil of their hearts, planting and cultivating the seeds of injustice, reaping what they had

sown and then consuming it. They had done this intentionally, as the word **“furrows”** shows an active endeavor to prepare the ground for a crop.

Hosea 10:5 **“The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.”**

“The inhabitants of Samaria shall be in terror for the calves of Beth-aven; for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced over it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.” (ASV)

“The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven.”

Samaria was the capital of the northern tribes from which decrees were issued regarding the worship of the idols. Fear for calves seems to be the idea of being afraid for the calves, i.e., what was happening to their beloved idols. Being taken as spoil by the Assyrians showed that these idols could not protect themselves or the people who worshipped them. The term **“Bethaven”** is substituted for Bethel. Note the difference in meaning of the two words: (1) Bethel — *“House of GOD”* and (2) Bethaven — *“house of vanity.”* Thus, the word **“Bethaven”** seems to be used as a designation of contempt for this place which was once a place of honor. Wherever idols are found, that place is a *“house of vanity!”*

“For the people thereof shall mourn over it.” The first thing to notice about this part of the verse is the phrase **“the people thereof.”** They are the people who belong to this idol; they choose it for their god.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death,

or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

They are no longer known as "the people of GOD," but rather "the people of the calf."

Further, note that they are not mourning over GOD, but rather the calf. They are mourning its inability to help them. They are mourning over its being taken from them.

"And the priests thereof that rejoiced on it." The priests who had formerly taken great joy in the worship of the calf are also pictured as being in fear and mourning the loss of the calf. The term "**priest**" is a different word than the one used to designate the true priests of GOD. The word used in this text is only used in the Scriptures to designate idolatrous priests.

"For the glory thereof, because it is departed from it." It might be asked, "What glory?" The people may have gloried in it or glorified it, but it had no glory in and of itself. Its glory was purely humanly devised. This is proven in the fact that it was deaf and dumb, that it could not move itself nor do anything for anyone, that it could not defend itself nor those who worshipped it.

Hosea 10:6 **"It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel."**

"It also shall be carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel." (ASV)

"It" refers back to the **"calves of Samaria."** They will not be able to save themselves, much less the people who worship them. The idols will be carried to Assyria and offered as gifts to king **"Jareb."**

"Hosea seems to employ sarcasm in this section, as he declares that the calf-god, which was formerly honored as the source of the people's gifts, is

now to be the gift given to the conquering king who brought destruction to Israel" (Graham. p. 200).

The term **"king Jareb"** is probably a figurative term for the king of Assyria. Some believe this term may mean *"strifeful"* or *"hostile"* king. The people had trusted in their calves, but they had also come to trust in Assyria through man-made treaties. The ones they placed trust in idols and Assyria would lead to their downfall.

The "wisdom" which led the people of Israel to trust their idols and seek security in Assyria, would be shown to be utterly foolish. They would then be ashamed because they had listened to such foolish counsel. When decisions need to be made in life, one should listen to the wisdom found in Jeremiah's words.

"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Jeremiah was saying, *"Look to GOD for instructions on how to live your life — man's directions will not get you to the goal."*

Hosea 10:7 **"As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water."**

"As for Samaria, her king is cut off, as foam upon the water." (ASV)

FOAM — gesep — *"It is an outburst of anger, especially the anger of Jehovah, man's wrath, strife, altercation, indignation, fury, a quarrel. This is the strongest of six main Hebrew syn. for anger. There is a homophonous word from an unused root that means a fragment of wood, a splinter (as though chipped off), a twig (broken off)"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning wrath. The word refers to anger aroused by someone's failure to do a duty"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1008).

The word **"foam"** is an interesting word, since its primary meaning deals with anger,

anger that exists because someone did not do his duty. The kings of Israel had failed to perform their duty of leading the people in paths of righteousness. They had failed to lead them in true religion, i.e., to serve faithfully the GOD of Heaven.

From an obscure root of this word the idea is of a tiny sliver of wood which is driven by the violent waves in the sea — the idea of angrily being driven. Another concept is like foam on the sea. Pusey gives this idea in the following quote.

“A bubble, or one of those little shreds which float in countless numbers on the surface of the water, give the image of lightness, emptiness, worthlessness, a thing too light to sink, but driven impetuously, and unresistingly, hither and thither, at the impulse of the torrent which hurries it along” (Pusey, p. 102).

The emphasis is that the king is of no importance like the foam (KJV & ASV) or the twig (NKJV).

Hosea 10:8 “The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.”

“The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.” (ASV)

DESTROYED — *samad* — *“To be desolate; to lay waste, be laid waste; to destroy, extirpate; to be utterly destroyed, annihilated”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to be destroyed. This verb is not used in its simple form and is only used in the passive and causative stems of the verb. The primary passive meaning to be destroyed, to be exterminated, or to be annihilated...The causative forms have the*

same root meanings as the passive forms. It can mean to annihilate, to exterminate people; or to destroy objects such as cities, fortresses, or idols” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1159).

The word **“Aven”** is variously translated as *“vanity or iniquity,”* (Barnes, p. 102), *“wickedness”* (Cook, p. 1401), and *“worthless, vile, useless”* (Butler, p. 538). It seems to be the short form of “Beth-aven.” The primary sin of the Israelites was their idolatry because that was a rejection of GOD. Now GOD is going to put an end to that worship. The places where they had previously worshipped those idols would become places of utter desolation, as signified by places grown over with thorns and thistles. He will accomplish this by using the armies of Assyria

“They shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.” In their anguish, the people would cry for the mountains around them to fall upon them — to destroy them. This seems to be a proverbial phrase which indicates utter helplessness in the face of utter hopelessness. Those who speak this way show that they understood their hopeless situation. In this position, their cry is for a quick end to their suffering — a cry for death instead.

“They are more willing to die than see the evils that bring death” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 304).

Their cries emphasize the severity of the punishment. Interestingly, they called for destruction from the mountains and hills where they had worshipped these idols.

It is interesting to note some other places where a similar cry for the mountains and hills to fall upon them is found.

a. Judah — **“They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His**

majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (Isaiah 2:19).

- b. Fall of Jerusalem — **“Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us”** (Luke 23:30).
- c. Enemies of GOD — **“And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb”** (Revelation 6:16).

Hosea 10:9 **“O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.”**

“O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood; the battle against the children of iniquity doth not overtake them in Gibeah.” (ASV)

The men of Gibeah were practicing homosexuals who raped and murdered the Levite’s concubine. Benjamin was called upon by the other tribes to hand over the offenders for punishment, which it would not. Instead, Benjamin tried to defend its countrymen (**“there they stood”**). As a result, the tribe of Benjamin was almost annihilated — only six hundred men survived. The point being brought out here is that these sins, and the idolatry in which the tribes of Israel engaged, now brought a worse destruction. Ten tribes would pass from existence — the nation would fail to exist (Read Joshua 19 and 20.).

Some have thought the present verse speaks of the anointing of Saul as the first king, which act denied GOD as king. But the passage under question speaks of destruction which did not come at the time Saul was proclaimed king.

Hosea 10:10 **“It is in My desire that I should chastise them; and the people**

shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.”

“When it is My desire, I will chastise them; and the peoples shall be gathered against them, when they are bound to their two transgressions.” (ASV)

FURROWS — ayin — *“To afflict, in the sense of something acted upon by an outside force, as an eye is by light. Eye, sight, appearance, presence, fountain. The noun has a wide variety of applications centered around the functions of the eye, and the extension of those functions”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine noun meaning an eye, a spring, a fountain. This Hebrew word is used to refer to either an aperture or a source”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 829).

“It is My desire.” In the beginning of the nation, GOD had said, **“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD...it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind”** (Deuteronomy 28:58, 63-65).

Now, according to GOD’s wish, according to His desire, they would be chastised. His justice would prevail against

them; they would be judged according to their deeds. They would be disciplined by the nations which GOD was gathering against them.

When would this happen? **“When they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.”** The word **“bind”** comes from asar, which is *“A verb meaning to bind, obligate, imprison, hold captive”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 82). Note **“they”** do the binding. Who? Israel — the people, their kings and princes, their priests — all have done this to themselves. They voluntarily obligated themselves to their idols; they imprisoned themselves in their desires to serve them; they held themselves in captivity to their own evil passions. They were all yoked together like oxen — the yoke of sin. Where the one went, they both went.

A number of commentators believe the idea of **“furrows”** refers to their transgressions. Like the eye, an outside force acts upon it to give an image to the mind (see definitions above). They bound themselves by the images they saw and after which they chased. Now they would be able to plainly see the destruction which was before them. An outside force was acting upon them. If the **“two furrows”** are two transgressions, then what are they? It would seem that they are the making of human chosen kings and the idolatry which consumed them. Some believe the **“two furrows”** are the twin idols at Bethel and Dan. One in the north and the other in the south of the kingdom would place the people between them in a furrow, so to speak. Coffman believes they were the rejection of GOD as their king and the homosexual actions typified by the use of Gibeah in this context (p. 176).

Hosea 10:11 **“And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair**

neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.”

“And Ephraim is a heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out the grain; but I have passed over upon her fair neck: I will set a rider on Ephraim; Judah shall plow, Jacob shall break his clods.” (ASV)

In the time in which this was written, there were basically two tasks performed by cattle: the treading of grain and pulling the plow. Of the two, the treading of grain was much easier and done without the muzzle (Deuteronomy 25:4). As the cattle threshed the grain, they were able to eat all they wanted. Being well fed, they tended to become fat.

Ephraim had the opportunity of performing the relatively easier task of obeying GOD, but she had become unfaithful and unruly in her work. Therefore, GOD would place a yoke upon her, signifying the hardships of more strenuous labor.

“Unwilling to bear the easy yoke of their Divine Ruler, they shall be subjected to the tyrant mastery of man” (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 13, p. 305).

Ephraim would be taken from what she was familiar with and placed in exile under a hard and demanding ruler. She would look back at her previous freedoms and pleasures with a longing to return to them. The old saying is correct: *“We do not realize the blessing we have until we have lost them.”*

“I will set a rider on Ephraim” (ASV) signifies one who would drive her in the work ahead. The rider’s job was to subdue the animal under him into obedience to his will. Ephraim will be forced into rugged slavery which would break her stubborn will. The original picture of this book was of an unfaithful wife who, because of her unwillingness to submit to her husband,

was made a slave, i.e., forced to submit.

Notice the almost incidental warning given to Judah and the prediction of her impending fate. Because of her disobedience, she will also have a yoke of bondage placed upon her neck.

Hosea 10:12 **“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you.”**

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to kindness; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek Jehovah, till He come and rain righteousness upon you.” (ASV)

SEEK — daras — *“A verb meaning to seek, to inquire of, to examine, to require...Its most important theological meaning involves studying or inquiring into the Law of the Lord or inquiring of God”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 249).

The figure of sowing and reaping is again employed. Righteousness, i.e., right doing, must be a standard part of one’s life whether it be toward his fellow man or toward GOD — his actions must be according to righteousness. If they would sow righteousness, they would in turn reap mercy. The mercy of GOD would far surpass what could be expected for their feeble efforts of right doing — such is just as true today. The mercy GOD meets out is a gift given through love to those who do not deserve its benefits. None can ever say he deserves the blessings Heaven bestows upon him, no matter how much he toils in the Lord’s field. All who pass from this life through the portals of Heaven are at best unworthy recipients of GOD’s blessings.

“GOD rewards men’s actions, not according to merit, but according to grace” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 306).

“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. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:7-9).

“The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward” (Proverbs 11:18).

“Fallow ground” is land which is allowed to sit idle, or it may never have been cultivated. They had allowed righteousness in their lives to lie dormant, inactive (uncultivated). The prophet told them to do something about this condition. Further, the prophet wanted them not to kindle a small amount of righteousness. They needed to be like an earnest farmer, who when he plowed his field does not play at plowing, but instead plows deep, turning the soil in great quantities. When such is done, the top-soil is buried. They needed to do the job in a complete manner, turning their lives over from unrighteousness to righteousness. If they did this, they would receive the mercy of GOD. Properly plowed ground (the heart) is ready to receive the seed (the Word of GOD – Luke 8:11) which produces a fruitful crop.

“He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

“For it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you” shows an attitude which must be exhibited by all people in seeking the Lord. One must not attempt to seek the Lord in a “happy-go-lucky” fashion. GOD must not be sought for a little while and then, when

instant results are not seen, forgotten. The effort to seek GOD must be sustained in a persistent manner all of one's life. This is a warning not to let the opportunity to return to GOD pass them by.

“For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

“Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our GOD, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6-7).

The phrase **“till He come”** speaks of the time when **“The Word”** (John 1:1) would come as the anointed One, the Savior — the Messianic age. At that time, life-giving righteousness would be poured forth from Heaven upon all who will humbly seek Him. This promised rain appears to be salvation.

*“In its first occurrence in this verse, **righteousness** is the seed sown in a fallow field; in its second usage, it is the effect of their righteousness (blessing) that a merciful God would send their way”* (Graham, p. 206).

Hosea 10:13 **“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.”**

“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; for thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.” (ASV)

WICKEDNESS — resa — *“It is a wrong (especially a moral one), iniquity,*

wickedness, godlessness, unrighteousness, lawlessness, injustice, dishonesty, fraudulent scales, falsehood, unlawful gain, wealth which was obtained in a wicked way” (Zodhiates, CD); *“A masculine noun meaning wickedness, injustice, and unrighteousness. It embodies that character which is opposite the character of God”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1079).

Verse twelve showed the people what they ought to have been doing, while this verse shows them what they had been doing. **“Ye have plowed wickedness,”** i.e., you have worked wickedness. They had plowed the ground, but instead of plowing deeply and planting wholesome grain (acts of righteousness), they had shallowly ploughed and planted (as it were) tares (sin). Tares will grow quite quickly and overgrow a field on their own without any help. Imagine what would happen if they were purposely planted and cultivated. In a figure, this is what Israel had done. They had purposely cultivated wickedness, and now they would reap what they had sown.

“Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of GOD they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed” (Proverbs 4:8-9).

“Ye have eaten the fruit of lies.” This is another way of saying they are full of lies. They lied to their friends, their children and themselves; but worst of all — they lied to GOD. They told themselves it was all right to serve the gods around them, even though GOD said it was not. They told themselves the lie that it was these gods who had provided for them. They said these gods had blessed them with numbers, power, and wealth. When man lies to himself long enough, he comes to believe his lies to be the truth. They lied

to GOD when they professed love for Him. Jesus expressed it this way, **“If ye love Me, keep My commandments”** (John 14:15). They would not keep GOD’s commandments, therefore they did not love Him.

Why did they plough wickedness and reap iniquity? Why did they eat the fruit of lies? **“Because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.”** They put their trust in their own decisions and the might of their military forces. They trusted **their king, their military power, their idols, and their military alliances** — all of which violated GOD’s will.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

“If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

When man thinks he can direct his own steps instead of leaning upon GOD for direction — he has made a fatal mistake.

There was a time in America when its leaders truly leaned upon GOD and His Word for direction and prayed fervently for direction. Now America’s leaders simply give lip service to GOD. We have come to believe that our banking system cannot fail, that we have the mightiest army the world has ever seen, and that our technology can solve any problem and keep us safe. But there is One who is far mightier than any and all of these things.

Haughty Nebuchadnezzar thought it was by his own power and ability that he had grown to such prominence in the world.

“The king spake, and said, Is not

this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty” (Daniel 4:30, emphasis mine, RK).

Upon speaking these words, GOD brought him down to the lowest levels of humanity.

“At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase” (Daniel 4:34-37).

How long, O Lord, wilt Thou show longsuffering to America as it turns more and more from reliance upon Thee to the lies of self-reliance?

Hosea 10:14 **“Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy**

fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.”

“Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be destroyed, as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces with her children.” (ASV)

“Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people.” This would be a great uproar or rumbling among the people caused either by an advancing army and the panic such would cause, or it may refer to the anarchy which was so prevalent in the last days of Israel. It should be remembered that in times of anarchy, everyone does that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25).

What would happen when the tumult arose? **“All thy fortresses shall be spoiled.”** They had taken delight in their armies and obviously the fortifications of their cities. GOD will show them, by the destruction of these cities, that all such confidence is foolishness.

Then Hosea reminded them of the destruction of a place known as **“Betharbel.”** Historically, there is no information on where this city was or what happened to it when Shalman spoiled it. But the people of Israel knew about this place and what had happened there.

“Shalman” is probably an abbreviation of the name Shalmaneser. Several of the kings of Assyria carried this name. It does not seem possible to absolutely know which one of them this event revolves around. Cook gives a list of those it is thought may have done this to Betharbel.

“The most popular identifications of Shalman have been: (a) Shalmaneser III (an Assyrian ruler who campaigned against the West in the ninth century B.C.), (b) Shalmaneser V (the Assyrian ruler from 727 to 722 B.C.; but his invasion

of Israel postdates Hosea’s prophecy), and (c) Salamanu (a Moabite king mentioned in a tribute list of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III and a contemporary of Hosea)” (p. 1402).

Wherever Betharbel was and whoever Shalman was, this was a terrible battle with atrocities which are hard to imagine. The text says, **“the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.”**

“It was an aggravation of this barbarity, that, first the infants were dashed against the stones before their mother’s eyes, then the mothers themselves were dashed upon them. Syrians, Assyrians, Medes, Babylonians, used this barbarity” (Pusey, p. 109).

For other scriptural evidence of this, see 2 Kings 8:12; Hosea 13; Isaiah 13:16; Psalm 137:8-9. These atrocities and many others are often found in warfare even today. Someone once said “War is hell.” Friend, the worst possible scenario of human war is nothing compared to a final destination in that eternal abode of the wicked.

Hosea 10:15 **“So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.”**

“So shall Beth-el do unto you because of your great wickedness: at daybreak shall the king of Israel be utterly cut off.” (ASV)

UTTERLY BE CUT OFF — damah — *“To cease, to rest, to be silent, to be quiet, to make an end, to destroy, to lay waste, to desolate, to be destroyed, to be cut off, to perish. This verb depicts a violent end”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to cease, to cause to cease, to be silent, to destroy”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 240).

“So shall Bethel do unto you.” The question is, *“How is it Bethel will do to them the terrible thing predicted in the foregoing*

verses?” Zerr probably has the correct understanding in answer to this question.

“Bethel-el do unto you denotes that the ruin of the nation was to be as a chastisement for its constant worship of idols, beginning with the one placed at Bethel” (p. 290).

The destruction was coming as a consequence of their idolatry brought by Jeroboam when he placed the golden calf at Bethel (1 Kings 12:29). The term **“great wickedness”** is literally *“wickedness of your wickedness”* (JFB, p. 495).

“In the morning shall the king of Israel be cut off.” The king spoken of here is no doubt Hoshea (2 Kings 17:1-6). The morning is often that which signals a new day, the beginning of a day which is better than the one or ones which went before it. Possibly the people looked to Hoshea’s coronation with the hope that a new day for Israel was dawning — but such was not to be. After him there would be no more kings in Israel — there would be no more Israel! And, it would happen quickly.

Hosea Chapter Eleven

Hosea 11:1 **“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”**

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” (ASV)

LOVED — ahab — *“To love, desire, delight,*

like, be fond of, covet, be beloved, amiable, be a passionate lover or paramour. It implies an ardent and vehement inclination of the mind and a tenderness of affection at the same time” (Zodhiates, CD).

This verse not only looks back into history, but it also looks ahead in prophecy. The passage points back to the time when Israel was in its infant stage. Remember that Israel became a nation while in bondage in Egypt. GOD loved this infant nation as a father loves his son, and thus refers to it in this relationship. As the Israelites matured as a nation, GOD took care of them, even though they faced stiff persecution.

“Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me” (Exodus 4:22-23).

As the people struggled through the wilderness, GOD took care of them because of His great love — even though they often rebelled against Him. When they rebelled, His love caused Him to discipline them, until finally they matured into dutiful children. Unfortunately, at the time Hosea wrote, GOD’s people left their mature state and digressed. His great love for them would now be shown through discipline — severe discipline.

There is a truth which should be touched on here, though many do not want to accept it. **A parent who will not discipline his child does not truly love him.** This fact is clearly seen when one studies GOD’s relationship with His firstborn — Israel. GOD trained the people, teaching them what they needed to know through Moses and the prophets. When He brought them out of Egypt, it was not to let them run wild or dictate to the parent what should be done. He trained them to be obedient, useful children. When they violated His rules of conduct, He chastised

them, not because He hated them, but because it was necessary to bring them into a state of obedience for their own good. When they became so disobedient that they would not turn back to His leadership, He had no choice but to disinherit them. Why did He have to go this far with discipline? Because, if His other children saw that there were no consequences for rebellion, they would be tempted to rebel as well. Discipline is a **vital** part of the welfare of any child — whether one speaks of the physical or spiritual application of such. Again it is repeated — **A parent who will not discipline his child does not truly love him!**

“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Hebrews 12:6-8).

There are too many who have come to the conclusion that they can rebel against GOD without consequence. They fail to see that the reason they do not suffer immediately as a result of their sins is the great love of GOD. Any time a human being sins, he deserves to immediately die. Why does he not die? Because GOD’s love causes Him to be longsuffering, giving the sinner time to repent.

“Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of GOD leadeth thee to repentance” (Romans 2:4)?

“The longsuffering of GOD waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that

is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20).

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Looking at this passage from the perspective of prophecy, it is quoted in Matthew 2:14-15 and applied to the Lord.

“When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son.”

When Herod the persecutor died, GOD called for His Son to come out of Egypt. The significance of being called out of Egypt is to be called out of slavery. The Word came into this world to call man from the slave land of sin, to a new life of freedom in Christ.

Hosea 11:2 “As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.”

“The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.” (ASV)

Who are the **“they”** at the beginning of this verse? The ASV inserts the word “prophets” here. It might be more proper and inclusive to think of **“they”** as messengers, i.e., those appointed by GOD to reveal His will, no matter what office they held.

“Whether God employed Moses, or the judges, or priests, or kings, or

prophets, it was all one. Whenever or by whomever they were called, they turned away in the opposite direction, to serve their idols” (Pusey, p. 110).

As GOD’s messengers called the people to obedience, the people turned their faces (“**went**”) away from them.

To what did they turn their faces to behold? “**Baalim**” and “**graven images.**” It should be remembered that “**Baalim**” is the plural of Baal and thus signifies a plurality of invisible and imaginary gods of the nations around them. “**Graven images**” would be the supposed visible “image” of the imaginary gods.

When the history of Israel is viewed, it can quickly be seen that this verse is a thumbnail sketch of its history of rebellion to GOD. As a people, they constantly rebelled against the messengers GOD sent them. It is worth asking — When GOD sent His ultimate messenger (The Word) to the world, how did the world in general act? Like Israel of old, it turned its face from Him in order to do its own thing. Is it any different today when GOD’s Word is taught by faithful men?

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in GOD” (John 3:19-21).

Hosea 11:3 “I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.”

“Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on My arms; but they knew not that I healed

them.” (ASV)

The illustration here is one of tender and loving care. It shows the love of GOD who set the people on their feet and taught them to walk (according to His ways). When children are taught to walk, their parents generally hold their hands to help them learn to step — step by step. As their strength and agility grows, they begin to launch out, yet this results in their stumbling and falling — sometimes hurting themselves. But though they make mistakes, the loving embrace of the parent is there to comfort them and set them aright and encourage them to try again. This is exactly the way GOD dealt with Israel and still deals with man.

GOD had treated Israel like a loving parent who teaches his child to walk. But how did Israel respond? It failed to understand and recognize the tender support and healing provided by Him.

“In the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy GOD bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your GOD” (Deuteronomy 1:31-32).

The care GOD gave Israel in its early stages is also spoken of in Ezekiel 16:1-14. In that passage, there is an emphasis on GOD’s saving them and caring for them when no one else wanted them. There the picture is of a baby uncared for and cast out. Such a child would soon die if not for the care of one who adopted him.

“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isaiah 1:3).

Hosea 11:4 “I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to

them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.”

“I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them.” (ASV)

The principle of “leading” is drawn from the common leading of an animal, but it is applied to the nation or people. People are not led in the same way an animal is often led — by force. Yet, even animals (if they have a kind master) are led as gently as possible, sometimes even by an enticement held out before them. Such was the case with Israel, gently drawn or led, like a father would lead his young child. In society today, young children are sometimes seen to be led by their parents with a “leash” in heavily congested areas. Why? So they can jerk them around? I think not! They do it because they are concerned with their safety. This writer is reminded of an incident in his own family. He was in Memphis with a broken leg, with the stick shift car which he could not drive, while his wife gave birth to their third child in Michigan. Six weeks after the baby was born, she boarded a bus with the three children to get back to Memphis. She was concerned about how to keep the children close and safe with the bus changes and in the busy terminals. She came up with the idea of taking a rope and tying them to her. To be sure, her plan got some odd looks from people but all four of them arrived safely. Israel was gently drawn or led toward righteousness as a loving parent would lead his child.

The idea of the yoke being moved would accomplish two things. (1) It kept the neck from being rubbed raw and provided rest for the ox. (2) It would allow the ox to eat. One should observe the reference to the feeding of the children of Israel. Physically, in their early stages, this was done with manna. When they invaded the land of Canaan,

GOD fed them with the crops planted by its inhabitants. After that, He abundantly provided them with increase of crops, animals, and their own offspring.

Love is the magnet used by GOD to lead His people. GOD always provides for His people in every area — both physically and spiritually. He always provides the best for them — if they will allow Him to do so. Today, GOD has given man His Son and the Gospel to direct man’s path so that he might gain the reward of eternity with Him. Because of the great care GOD has directed toward man, man in turn ought to love Him.

“Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:16-18).

“His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

It is apparent that the Israelites did not look at these matters as they should have. They seemed to look at GOD as placing great burdens upon them which benefitted only Himself. This was not the correct way to look at Him. He was leading them so that they might receive His blessings. Instead of viewing GOD as a kind and merciful master, Israel viewed Him as a cruel slave master. The constraint they should have felt was one of love.

“The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

True love will cause one to obey GOD and never view His will as something burdensome.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Today, GOD leads man through His Word toward great blessings. How is man responding — like a stubborn ox or with gratefulness for His great loving care?

“O My people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants” (Micah 6:3-4).

Hosea 11:5 “He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.”

“They shall not return into the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be their king, because they refused to return to Me.” (ASV)

In chapters eight and nine, Hosea had told them they were going to Egypt. This might have led some to believe that “if” a captivity came, it would be in Egypt. In the present text the Israelites were clearly told they would be in bondage to Assyria. Let one remind himself that the word **“Egypt”** is

often used in the Bible to speak of bondage. It was used in that sense in chapter eight and nine. Now it is no longer used in a symbolic way.

It should be remembered that in the latter years of Israel’s existence, the people had sought Egypt’s help when they rebelled against Assyrian rule. This indicates that they would rather be under Egypt’s rule than Assyrian’s. The significance here may be, *“You may desire to return to Egypt, but you cannot — you will go to Assyria.”*

Why had the time of punishment come? Because they refused to return to GOD — they refused to repent. They had made their minds up and had hardened their hearts just as Pharaoh had done in the long ago. Does the reason for their punishment ring a bell with regard to another time?

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” (Matthew 23:37)!

Regarding the reason given for Israel’s punishment in this passage, note the words of Butler and compare them with people’s excuses for evil action today.

“The reason is stated simply. Because they would not repent of their self-willed idolatry and return to worshipping and serving Jehovah. There were no humanistic, sociological, psychological, economic, cyclic-historical explanation offered by the preacher of God. It was simply that the people of God had broken their covenant relationship with Him — they did not obey His word” (p. 549).

Hosea 11:6 “And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his

branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.”

“And the sword shall fall upon their cities, and shall consume their bars, and devour them, because of their own counsels.” (ASV)

ABIDE — hul — “To turn in a circle, whirl, twist, revolve; to writhe; to be in labor (of childbirth); to bear a child, be born; to be afraid, tremble; to reel; to wait; to hope; to rage; to assault; to be strong, be pithy; to produce; to cause to bring forth; to hope, to wait; to cause to tremble; to shake; to wait anxiously; to be grieved. There are two main ideas to this verb: (1) spinning; (2) twisting in labor pangs” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to whirl, to shake, to fear, to dance, to writhe, to grieve. This word has many different meanings, most of which derive from two basic ideas: to whirl in motion and to writhe in pain” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 319).

CONSUME — kalah — “To be completed, finished, accomplished, ready; to be at an end; to be consumed, be destroyed, to vanish; to cease, end; to spend, to destroy; to determine. It appears both trans. and intrans. throughout the OT. The processes may be either positive or negative, i.e., something may be continually added to until it is full or complete, or something may be taken away from until there is nothing left. The English word ‘finish’ has a similar semantic range in both directions. It is the total task, working until the job is done. Sometimes the idea of exhaustion, being entirely consumed, is included in the word.” (Zodhiates, CD); “A verb meaning to complete, to accomplish, to end, to finish, to fail, to exhaust. Its primary meaning is to consummate or to bring to completion” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 507).

“And the sword shall abide on his cities.” The Israelites thought the combination of their military and fortresses, along with a treaty with Egypt, was strong enough to defend themselves. Indeed, a

sword is going to abide on their cities — but it will not be their own. The sword symbolizes the war which is coming and is an indication of the devastation soon to envelop them. Note, this sword will **“abide”** (consider the definition of the original above). A sword in its sheath is an indication of peace and cannot circle or whirl around. It is only when the sword is being used that such motion can exist. The sword shall be circling their cities, i.e., this war sword of the Assyrians will be going through the nation not once but over and over.

“Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall not return, until He have executed, and till He have performed the thoughts of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly” (Jeremiah 23:19-20).

Note the following short history of what happened in the Assyrian invasion as given by Clarke.

“Although Zechariah his (Jeroboam II, RK), son reigned twelve years, yet it was in continual troubles; and he was at last slain by the rebel Shallum, who, having reigned one month, was slain by Menahem. Pekahiah succeeded his father Menahem, and reigned two years, and was killed by Pekah, son of Ramaliah. He joined Rezin, king of Syria, and made an irruption into the land of Judah; but Ahaz having obtained succour from Tiglath-Pileser, 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; and

in a short time after, Hosea, 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; but this being known to Shalmaneser, he came against Samaria, and after a three years' siege took and destroyed it. Thus the sword rested upon their cities; it continued in the land till all was ruined" (Vol. 4, p. 647).

"And shall consume his branches."

The word "**branches**" is thought to have two possible meanings: (1) their mighty men, i.e., their warriors, their army, and (2) the dependent cities around them upon whom Ephraim would also depend for supplies, et cetera. A tree depends upon its branches for nourishment as well as other things. Cut the branches off, and the tree is left with only a stump and will probably die. While Samaria was under siege for about three years, these other cities would have been under attack as well. Further, the military, after constantly fighting for all of this time, would become fewer and fewer in number. All of this would eat up any number of resources the nation might have, until finally there would be complete devastation.

Why would all of this happen? **"Because of their own counsels."** They thought they could think and plan their way to prosperity, protection and peace. But the thinking of their leaders, religious and secular, would only cause them to be consumed.

"He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the

froward is carried headlong"

(John 5:13-14).

Man must not forget GOD in all that he does. Instead of trying to develop his own plan, why not just follow GOD's plan? True happiness can only be found when man submits his will to GOD's will. Is that not the lesson the wise man finally learned?

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear GOD, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole of man. For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good, or whether evil"

(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Hosea 11:7 **"And My people are bent to backsliding from Me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him."**

"And My people are bent on backsliding from Me: though they call them to Him that is on high, none at all will exalt Him." (ASV)

The same thing said about Israel will later be said about Judah.

"Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return"

(Jeremiah 8:5).

"And My people are bent to backsliding from Me." It should be noted that even in the terrible condition of Israel at this time, even though the people refused to accept GOD or follow His will, Israel is still referred to as **"My people."** How many parents have suffered this same situation over the years? They love their child, but when that child grows up, he turns his back on everything the parents stand for and will have nothing to do with them. Yet, those same parents will call that person my son/daughter. So it is with GOD and His sons and daughters.

The word “**bent**” shows the determination of GOD’s people to turn away from Him. They were bound as if by fetters of iron to accomplish what GOD had declared was evil. They were determined to backslide, i.e., turn away, move away from GOD. Why? The answer is found in what is known today as humanism. Humanism says that man is the ultimate and that he alone rules himself. Humanism makes each man his own god. The practice of humanism can only lead to anarchy — each man doing that which is right in his own eyes.

“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes”
(Judges 17:6; 21:25).

When the Lord is not allowed to be the king of one’s life, then that person will do whatever he wants to do.

“Though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him.” The renderings of the KJV and ASV are to be preferred to the NKJV. **“They”** most likely refers to the few who knew GOD’s revelations, i.e., the prophets. This would also include the few who did listen and take heed to their words. They would by necessity have called upon their brethren to repent, to turn back to GOD. But the people as a whole refused to listen, and even if they listened, refused to exalt GOD instead of self and their idols (Hosea 10:13). Again, this is very much the attitude of those who practice humanism. One cannot exalt GOD and hold on to his selfish wishes. Humanism is not progression upward but digression downward.

Hosea 11:8 **“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together.”**

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how

shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My compassions are kindled together.”
(ASV)

TURNED — hapak — *“To turn, turn over, turn around, turn back; to overturn, overthrow; to convert, change; to pervert; to destroy”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A verb meaning to turn around, to change, to throw down, to overturn, to pervert, to destroy, to be turned against, to turn here and there, to wander”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 270).

REPENTINGS — nihum — *“A masculine noun indicating comfort, compassion...It has the sense of emotions and speaks of comfort, feelings of compassion that arise”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 721).

“In order to show that our ills are from our own ill-deserts, not from any pleasure of His inflicting ill, and that what mercy He showeth, is from His own goodness, not from any of us, God is represented in this impassioned expression as in doubt, and (so to say) divided betwixt justices and mercy, the one pleading against the other. At the last, God so determines, that both should have their share in the issue, and that Israel should be both justly punished and mercifully spared and relieved” (Pusey, p. 113).

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?” Admah and Zeboim are mentioned here, being two of the five cities of the plain, which were so totally destroyed by GOD’s anger because of their sins that no trace of them has ever been found.

“The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth,

nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath”
(Deuteronomy 29:23).

Ephraim and Israel are compared to these two cities. How so? They deserved to be destroyed to the same degree as were Admah and Zeboim — in fact, they deserved it more. Why? Because they had known the true GOD of Heaven and had served Him at one time. GOD had showered His blessings upon them, yet they had betrayed Him.

These passages cause one to see the great love GOD has for man — ESPECIALLY His people. It is true love that knows some type of stiff punishment is due the child, but the great love of the parent cringes at the thought of what he must do.

“This is going to hurt me more than it does you.”

How many parents through time can relate to this sentiment? It is safe to say that you, the reader of this have felt this way toward your children at one time or another. The infinite justice of GOD demanded punishment for their stubborn rebellion to Him — while His great and abundant mercy desired that the punishment should not be necessary or that He did not have to administer it. The picture being shown is that when GOD’s children rebel against Him, His heart is broken.

“Mine heart is turned within Me.” This writer will take a little different stance here than most commentators. This phrase shows how GOD had to change His attitude toward Ephraim and Israel. In His love for them, He had once showered them with blessing, but now His love demanded that they be treated as the rebelliously wicked and unrepentant children they had become. Yet, though they would be punished, He still loved them deeply. Thus, He desired to turn

from destruction, desired to turn away from the punishment He was about to inflict — but He could not. The NKJV interprets this phrase as “My heart churns within Me.”

“My repentings are kindled together.”

The word **“repentings”** comes from the Hebrew word nihum, which as indicated above, refers to the emotions of comfort and compassion. Because these were His children, the churning of His heart stirred up these emotions of compassion for them. He knows how severe the punishment could be, i.e., that they deserved the same punishment as was rendered to Admah and Zeboim. His compassion is about to come into play. Again, noticing the NKJV here, “My sympathy is stirred.”

This reminds this writer of a case a few years ago in Georgia, where a young man brutally murdered a man and woman. The police could not make a case against anyone because of a lack of evidence. Finally, the case grew cold. But then a young man admitted to his father, who was an FBI agent, that he had murdered these two people. The father agonized over this situation all night, because he knew he held the power over his son’s future. The next morning he knew, even though he loved his son dearly, that justice must be served. He turned his son in and later testified against him in court. It was his testimony which brought three death sentences upon his son. He still loved his son and visited him every week on death row, understanding all the time that justice must prevail.

The justice of GOD must prevail and man can be assured that it will. Yet, there is a way to avoid the justice of GOD — at least the eternal aspect of it. How? It is simple — quit committing sin and obey GOD for the rest of one’s life to the best of his ability. At the same time, there are certain consequences for evil actions which will have to be paid, as in the above

illustration. Consider the consequences David had to endure after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. One can be forgiven yet suffer consequences for his past sins.

“Justice demands thy punishment; Mercy pleads for thy life” (Clarke, p. 647).

As will be seen, though Ephraim and Israel deserved the same fate of total annihilation as Admah and Zeboim, GOD’s mercy did not annihilate them.

Hosea 11:9 “I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am GOD, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.”

“I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am GOD, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath.” (ASV)

If GOD issued the judgment they deserved, they would be as utterly destroyed as were the cities of the plain. But His mercy is shown when He declared, **“I will not return to destroy Ephraim.”** The execution of His judgment would be carried out, and the punishment He had decreed would take place. But He would not go beyond what He said He would do. Man, because of his passions, will go beyond his original intentions, stopping only when his passions subside. How thankful man should be that GOD is not like man. How long would the world have lasted if GOD were like man? It would probably have been destroyed long before the flood. When GOD does something, it is accomplished within the realms of His perfect holiness. Part of that holiness involves the attribute of divine mercy.

“GOD is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and

shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good” (Numbers 23:19)?

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

The last phrase of this passage is a promise of mercy. GOD Himself would not enter their cities to destroy them, because if He did there would have been complete destruction — no trace of them would have ever been found.

Hosea 11:10 “They shall walk after the LORD: He shall roar like a lion: when He shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.”

“They shall walk after Jehovah, Who will roar like a lion; for He will roar, and the children shall come trembling from the west.” (ASV)

“Once the wrath has been poured out, He will have mercy on the remnant. This is verified by what follows: ‘They shall walk after Jehovah,’ which is the remnant who give heed. To walk after Jehovah is to be obedient to His will. God will roar, make His voice heard, and the meek will come trembling from the west, or from the sea” (Hailey, p. 174).

There is little doubt in this writer’s mind that these passages speak of the time of the Messiah and His kingdom — the church. Punishment was described in the

passages before this — a punishment by the Assyrians which would be terrible in its accomplishment. Mercy was also seen as coming upon them. Not all would be destroyed — there would be a remnant left. Of that remnant some would return in the days of Ezra. But far beyond the meaning of some of those of Israel coming in obedience to the Lord's call would be those of the west — the Gentiles.

“They shall walk after the LORD.” To walk after the Lord is to walk as He has directed, i.e., in obedience to Him (Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 2:10; 5:8; 2 John 6). One must follow His example, which was always one of obedience to His Father's will (Matthew 26:42).

“He shall roar like a lion.” To roar like a lion is to send forth a strong cry, a powerful message. The lion of Judah, the Christ, would proclaim the will of GOD to man. This was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, when GOD's powerful word was sent forth to all the world.

What would the roar of the lion cause? **“When He shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.”** It is interesting to this writer that when the nations gathered at Pentecost are named, most of them are found to be west or southwest of Jerusalem. That is, the Jews which had come from Gentile nations. When the people gathered heard the Gospel message for the first time, their reaction was anxious fear because of what they now realized they had done. This remnant was now willing to walk after the Lord and demonstrated such by obeying the commands given for salvation on that day.

Hosea 11:11 “They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.”

“They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; and I will make them to dwell in

their houses, saith Jehovah.” (ASV)

The picture drawn here is of fleeing from bondage in order to receive the blessings offered by the Lord. In fleeing from the bondage of sin, a place of safety is provided.

Hosea 11:12 “Ephraim compasseth Me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with GOD, and is faithful with the saints.”

“Ephraim compasseth Me about with falsehood, and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah yet ruleth with GOD, and is faithful with the Holy One.” (ASV)

After dealing with the future, the prophet comes back to the present. Ephraim surrounds GOD with lies, and Israel was full of fraud and treachery.

On the other hand, Judah is mentioned as being still faithful to GOD. Perfect — totally following His rule? No! It has already been mentioned in Hosea that idolatry was found in Judah. Though not perfect, yet the people were faithful, i.e., they were predominantly willing to listen to and follow GOD's will. The condition of both Israel and Judah will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Hosea

Chapter Twelve

Hosea 12:1 “Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.”

“Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he continually multiplieth lies and desolation; and they make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried into Egypt.” (ASV)

“Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind.” The use of **“wind”** and **“east wind”** is similar to the language used earlier in Hosea 8:7. One who feeds on wind is feeding on emptiness. When one eats, he hopefully feeds on that which will strengthen his body for the labors ahead. But Ephraim’s hope for strength was a false one. Chasing after the godless nations and their false gods was like chasing a tornado which suddenly reverses course and consumes the chasers. It was like one who chases after an enemy and then begs the enemy to turn to destroy him.

The east wind spoken of in this passage has a name which is still known and feared

in the east. It is called “sirocco.”

SIROCCO — “A hot or warm wind of cyclonic origin from an arid or heated region” (Webster, CD).

This wind is particularly dreaded because it scorches the crops and leaves nothing but devastation in its wake.

“The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place” (Job 27:21).

Israel is simply and tragically following a course of destruction.

“He daily increaseth lies and desolation.” *“Lying will signify false speaking, false dealing, false belief, false opinions, false worship, false pretenses for color thereof, false hopes, or relying on things that will deceive”* (Pusey, p. 117). Israel was guilty of all of these kinds of lies and continually increased her lies. The more wicked she became, the greater was her desolation, the greater the punishment.

The people made a covenant with Assyria which they did not intend to keep. While trying to placate the Assyrians, they were sending gifts (oil signifies something of great value) to Egypt, for the purpose of winning her friendship and protection. This points to the real problem. The alliances with these nations showed their lack of faith in GOD. In a real sense, they did not believe GOD could protect them from their enemies. This lack of faith would lead to Israel’s destruction.

Hosea 12:2 “The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will He recompense him.”

“Jehovah hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will He recompense him.” (ASV)

To this writer, this verse seems like the answer to an anticipated question.

Idolatrous Israel, upon hearing these decrees against her, might look south. Seeing some idolatry in Judah, Israel might ask, *“What about Judah?”* To which the answer is given that GOD will deal with her, too. Judah is not completely innocent, though not yet as guilty as Israel. GOD has a **“controversy”** or “law suit” against her.

The term **“Jacob”** stands for the whole nation. All will be punished for their rebellion to GOD. Unlike Israel, Judah’s punishment will not be quite as severe. After the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, Judah would be allowed to return to the land and once again be recognized as an individual nation. Question: If GOD had not promised Abraham and David the Messiah through their blood-line, would Judah have been allowed to return to the land?

The mention of Jacob draws their minds back to the time when the nation as a whole began. Thus begins a section which reproves both nations, because they had their beginnings at the same point; they had the same GOD who watched over them and blessed them. Yet, they both drifted away from GOD and showed ingratitude for all of His blessings.

Hosea 12:3 “He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with GOD:”

“In the womb he took his brother by the heel; and in his manhood he had power with GOD:” (ASV)

This refers back to the physical birth of Jacob.

“After that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them” (Genesis 25:26).

The action which took place in that context

is significant, because it indicated that Jacob would become the greater of the two (Genesis 27:36). In their later lives, this proved to be true. Jacob (the supplanter) became the father of the twelve heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was through his seed that the Messiah would finally come — not Esau's seed.

What was the great strength of Jacob? What gave him power with GOD? It seems that the only conclusion one can adequately come to is his tenacious faith. Look at his life — it was one of faithful reliance on the Giver of all true strength. This does not mean that his faith never wavered. His deception of his father regarding the birthright shows a wavering faith, because he did not wait for the Lord to direct the fulfilling of His promise. His overall faithfulness is memorialized in Hebrews chapter eleven — he would not give up — he kept trying to serve GOD faithfully. That faith gave him power to overcome the world and receive the blessings GOD offered. This then seems to be an admonition for Israel to return to the attitude of Jacob, i.e., to respect the birthright promised to them by obeying GOD. An admonition to develop the faith of Jacob, a faith that would have power with GOD and bring His blessings upon them.

This writer cannot help but consider another aspect of Jacob's supplanting Esau and receiving the blessing. Israel was GOD's firstborn and should have received the blessings from the Messiah as a people. But the people have been supplanted because, like Esau, they did not appreciate the birthright nor strive to keep it. Today, Christians have supplanted (so-to-speak) physical Israel as GOD's people and have received the blessings of the Messiah. Consider also that most Christians are Gentiles; thus, Gentiles supplanted the Jews as GOD's elect.

Hosea 12:4 “Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him: He found him in Bethel, and there He spake with us;”

“yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto Him: He found him at Beth-el, and there He spake with us,” (ASV)

The physical occurrence mentioned here is found in Genesis 32:24-32. Moses' account does not mention the tears of this passage. By inspiration, Hosea is told that Jacob gained power because of his tears and supplications. Without this account, it might be assumed that Jacob had prevailed because of his physical strength. Such was not the case. Jacob prevailed because of his great faith which caused him to pray earnestly, coupled with tears. It is this writer's belief that the tears were shed because of his earnest desire for GOD's blessings. His attitude of sincerity is clearly seen in these events and showed the great faith he had.

“The power of Jacob to prevail was the power of Israel to prevail if they wanted to. The same God who was with Jacob could be with Israel” (Richard Curry, class notes).

“He found him in Bethel” is a term which could mean either that Jacob found GOD or that GOD found Jacob at the house of GOD (Bethel). Who found Whom? GOD came to Jacob, **“and there He spake with us.”** When GOD spoke to Jacob, He was speaking to all those who came after him. The promises pertained to himself and to all his descendants.

Hosea 12:5 “Even the LORD GOD of hosts; the LORD is His memorial.”

“even Jehovah, the GOD of hosts; Jehovah is His memorial name.” (ASV)

The phrase **“LORD GOD of hosts”** should have great significance to GOD's

children. What hosts? In its broadest sense, all which can be seen or even thought. GOD is the absolute ruler of all He surveys, whether it be in Heaven, on earth or in the broader expanses of what is known as the universe or universes.

Regarding the word "LORD," Coffman gives the following helpful information.

"The sacred Hebrew Tetrammaton, the mystic four-letter word used of the Deity, is composed of the four Hebrew Consonants YHWH, usually translated Jehovah in the ASV (Exodus 17:15). The true and original pronunciation of it has been totally and completely lost. That loss came about because the Jews took a very strict and almost fanatical view of the third commandment (Exodus 20:7), and decided not to pronounce the name at all. That way they could keep from taking God's name in vain! This occurred about 300 B.C. When they came to that word in reading, they pronounced the word 'Adonai,' meaning Lord; and thus when the LXX was translated, they rendered it 'Lord,' which is the rendition found in the AV. The ASV renders it Jehovah. The Tetragrammaton is derived from a root word, meaning 'To be,' and is related to 'I am that I am' of Exodus 3:14. The word means that God is the Absolute, the Uncaused One, holy and eternal" (p. 196).

Considering what is said above, consider that the word "Jehovah" is a made up word. Where did the vowels come from (Jehovah), since they never existed in the original? Consider what that means to those who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses." First, they are not witnesses, because no man has seen GOD and lived. Second, they cannot pronounce His real name. Most people this writer knows get at least a little offended if one mispronounces their names.

Hosea 12:6 "Therefore turn thou to thy GOD: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy GOD continually."

"Therefore turn thou to thy GOD: keep kindness and justice, and wait for thy GOD continually." (ASV)

WAIT — qawah — *"To bind together (by twisting); to collect; to be gathered together, be joined; to meet; to lie in wait for someone; to expect, await, look for patiently, hope; to be confident, trust; to be enduring (another kind of strength)" (Zodhiates, CD); "A verb meaning to wait for, to look for, to hope for. The root meaning is that of twisting or winding a strand of cord or rope, but it is uncertain how that root meaning relates to the idea of hope" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 986).*

"Therefore turn thou to thy GOD."

The prophet encourages the people of Israel to turn to their GOD for strength and hope. To turn to GOD would be an admission that they had previously turned away from GOD. Further, in encouraging them to turn to GOD, there is an assurance that this can be done by them. Without repentance with regard to one's actions toward GOD, there can be no change of heart toward their fellow man. When man abandons GOD and His precepts, he will become the animal that evolution advocates he is — thus one will do unto others before they do unto him. That one's philosophy will be *"might makes right,"* which produces a spirit of anarchy. Such a one will not only deal deceitfully with GOD but also with his fellow man. Is that not what the Israelites did when they turned from GOD to the dumb idols, which were nothing more than an extension of themselves?

Consider the word **"therefore,"** because it signifies a conclusion. Why should they turn to GOD? What motivation was there to turn back to GOD? In the preceding verses, Hosea had warned them

that a judgment was coming. This was a judgment which would not declare them innocent but guilty, with an assurance they would be punished accordingly. If one did not wish to be punished, he would have to turn to GOD, i.e., repent. Another motive for turning to GOD is found in the picture of Jacob. Jacob was a man who, because of his faithful trust in GOD, was greatly rewarded. If one wants the blessings of GOD in life and eternity, he must turn to GOD. Another motive for turning to GOD is seen in the very nature of GOD. He is the eternal One, the all-powerful One, and the One who cannot lie. Therefore, when GOD speaks, His purpose will be carried out.

“Keep mercy and judgment.” What does one who turns to GOD do? He shows lovingkindness (mercy) toward his fellow man. The context of this book shows the people of Israel to be robbing, murdering, and in general treating their fellow men in cruel manners — while they professed to love GOD. A man cannot love GOD if he does not love his fellow man!

“If a man say, I love GOD, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth GOD love his brother also” (1 John 4:20-21).

What does one do who turns to GOD? He exercises judgment, i.e., justice toward his fellow man. This will be true whether it is one-on-one contact or as a group. He will not act in an unjust manner under any circumstance.

“And wait in GOD continually.” In observing the word **“wait,”** the Hebrew word signifies a binding together (see above). In other words, the idea is to bind oneself to GOD by twisting like a rope. Anyone who observes a rope will see a number of

strands of material which are twisted together or woven together to make the rope. Each strand of material by itself will have some strength to accomplish the task. But when the individual strands are twisted or woven together, they become much stronger. In order for GOD’s children to be strong and able to accomplish the task of overcoming the evil one with all of his fiery darts, they must unite themselves with GOD. This requires GOD’s child to make GOD’s will his own will!

*“This word **continually**, hath no small weight in it, shewing with what circumstances or properties their waiting or hope on God ought to be attended; that it ought to be Him alone, on Him always, without doubting, fainting, failing, intermission or ceasing, in all occasions and conditions which may befall them, without exception of time, even in their adversity”* (Pusey, p. 121).

Friend, GOD never changes!!! Whether it be in the days of Jacob, the days of Hosea, or today — GOD is the same! The principles of how GOD deals with man never change. He would have given Israel the same blessings He had given Jacob. **TURN BACK, ISRAEL! TURN BACK!**

Hosea 12:7 **“He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.”**

“He is a trafficker, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.” (ASV)

DECEIT — mirmah — *“It means craft, deceit, fraud, falsehood, guile, treachery; ill-gotten wealth”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“A feminine noun meaning fraud, deceit. The term signifies the intentional misleading of someone else through distortion or withholding the truth”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 671).

OPPRESS — *asaq* — “A verb meaning to oppress, to defraud. It refers to extorting or exploiting someone, especially a servant. It has the sense of cheating or robbing in some contexts; keeping what is rightfully someone else’s” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 879).

“**He is a merchant.**” The word “**merchant,**” according to every commentator this writer read, means “*Canaan or Canaanite.*” The Canaanites were the chief traders of their day, and they were known for their crooked weights and measures.

“The word ‘trafficker’ (ASV, RK) is actually ‘a Canaanite,’ a word that came to mean merchant or trader, and especially a deceitful and crooked one... ‘To Corinthianize’ meant to debauch; and ‘Canaanite’ meant a crooked, false trader” (Coffman, p. 198).

The Israelites are now compared to these crooked Canaanites. They tried to deceive both the Egyptians and Assyrians. The rulers and priests deceived the people into disbelieving the true messengers of GOD. But worst of all, their “attempted” deceit was also directed toward GOD — both directly and indirectly. Directly, because they refused to obey GOD’s laws. Indirectly, through those they deceived into disobeying GOD. GOD expects men to have fair dealings with everyone they come into contact with, whether it be personal, business or religious.

“**A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight**” (Proverbs 11:1; cf. Leviticus 19:35-37 and Deuteronomy 25:13-16).

“**The balances of deceit are in his hand.**” One of the tricks used by the Canaanite traders was to use false balances or weights. For instance, if a weight used for measure was supposed to be one pound, when the unscrupulous trader bought some

grain, he would use a weight more than one pound. Thus, he received more grain than he should have received. But when he sold the grain, he would use a weight less than one pound. Thus, the merchant received more money than he should have.

“**He loveth to oppress.**” The Israelites enjoyed to a high degree their defrauding, extorting and exploiting of others. GOD, as stated above, places moral obligations upon His people. It is not all right for GOD’s child to cheat another child of GOD. Since all human beings were created by GOD, then it is not right to cheat anyone. The Israelites defrauded each other and the nations around them. There is a principle here that may be best illustrated in Acts chapter nine. Paul was on the road to Damascus for the purpose of persecuting Christians. He had already done this to others by giving his authority for some to be put to death (Acts 7:58). On this road, the Lord appeared to him and asked this pertinent question: “**Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me**” (Acts 9:4)? Saul had not physically touched the Lord, nor had he physically wielded an instrument which had tortured His body. Yet, he was persecuting the Lord Himself — not directly but indirectly. The point is that when man mistreats a human being, he is mistreating the GOD who created him — whether that one is a saint or sinner.

“The treatment accorded to fellowmen never rises any higher than the concept of deity that people hold, and in this instance such a low concept was the ceiling that limited their dealings with others” (Graham, p. 231).

Hosea 12:8 “**And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.**”

“And Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth: in all my

labors they shall find in me no iniquity that were sin.” (ASV)

INIQUITY — awon — “A depraved action, perversity, perverseness, sin, guilt, a crime, a fault, iniquity, mischief” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning iniquity, evil, guilt, punishment. This is one of the four main words indicating sin in the Old Testament. This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrongdoing” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 814).

“And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance.”

The attitude being expressed by Ephraim is one of boasting. In the previous verse, GOD accused the people of being deceitful and loving to oppress. In reality, they had gotten much of their gain by stealing from others.

“In all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.” Ephraim seems to be saying, “*I do not have any sin, because I am rich.*” This is the attitude that says that the end justifies the means used to attain that end. Their attitude is not uncommon to mankind. It is the idea that “*I must be all right because I am prospering.*” Man has had this attitude all through the ages. When one looks back at the book of Job, he sees it in the attitude of Job’s “friends.” When Job was stricken and all of his riches were taken away, they said this happened to Job because of his sins, and those sins must have been terrible. The opposite of that is “*one must be right in GOD’s sight because he is prospering.*” This is the same attitude seen in John chapter nine, where one finds a man born blind. The assumption was that he would not be blind if either he or his parents had not sinned. Put another way — if one is suffering or poor, he is a sinner. If one is well and prospering, he is righteous. This is

false! If the rain (blessing), falls on the just and the unjust, then the hurricane falls on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45).

The Ephraimites lust for money had blinded them to their own pitiful condition. They were full of “**iniquity**,” i.e., they were full of depravity and sin — they had consciously involved themselves in sin. Paul said in reference to those who thought that “**gain is godliness**” that they should be withdrawn from (1 Timothy 6:5). He went on to say, “**They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows**” (1 Timothy 6:9-10). Look at the Lord’s assessment of those who think riches make them acceptable to GOD.

“Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:16-17).

The Laodiceans thought their riches were an indication that GOD was pleased with them. How wrong they and all who follow that philosophy are.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Side note: There was once a time in the United States when the Lord’s church was on the “wrong side of the tracks,” i.e., quite poor. Congregations had to meet in store fronts, and sometimes late on Saturday night they had to clean up a bar room so they could have a place to worship on Sunday. During that time the church was

strong, and its members could and did stand for truth. Standing for truth without compromise, congregations grew until one day they could afford their own buildings. The progression has gone on until they have been able to afford large and often fancy buildings. But in doing so, many have become like the church at Laodecia — becoming luke-warm, compromising the truth, and having no evangelistic zeal.

Hosea 12:9 “And I that am the LORD thy GOD from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.”

“But I am Jehovah thy GOD from the land of Egypt; I will yet again make thee to dwell in tents, as in the days of the solemn feast.” (ASV)

GOD has always been the GOD of the faithful. What the Israelites are being reminded of is the time they became a nation and Who it was that had cared for them during that time. They needed to be reminded that it was GOD who had sustained them in Egypt, through the desert, and into the promised land. There GOD had continued to bless them. They had forgotten these things.

During their wilderness wanderings, they had lived in portable buildings (tents). During that time they had learned to depend on GOD for everything. The Feast of Tabernacles was designed to remind them of that time. During this feast, they were to build temporary dwelling places and live in them for the seven days of the feast. Again, this would remind Israel of GOD’s loving care of them. Living in these nomadic conditions would cause a desire for a permanent dwelling place.

There is something far more important than physical wealth for which man should strive.

“By faith he (Abraham, RK) sojourned in the land of promise,

as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD” (Hebrews 11:9-10).

Man needs to be reminded often that this world is not his home. Man is simply passing through this world on a journey to a permanent dwelling place — either Heaven or Hell. Thus, it is better to live in a pauper’s house and be faithful to GOD than to live in a mansion without Him.

The Feast of Tabernacles should have reminded Israel of several things. (1) It should have reminded them of the mercy GOD had shown them in delivering them from bondage. (2) It should have reminded them of the tender care GOD gave them in the wilderness. (3) It should have reminded them to be thankful for all GOD had done for them and had continued to do for them. (4) It should have reminded them of their obligation to fulfill GOD’s law. The law was to be read to them during this feast.

“The feast of tabernacles typifies this our pilgrim-state, the life of simple faith in God, for which God provides; poor in this world’s goods, but rich in God” (Pusey, p. 123).

Let one remind himself that GOD is threatening Israel. He had brought them from a state where they had nothing to being blessed abundantly with material blessing. He could take everything He had given them away and return them to their previous state. When they refused to obey Him, that is exactly what happened as they were taken into Assyrian captivity.

Hosea 12:10 “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”

"I have also spoken unto the prophets, and I have multiplied visions; and by the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes." (ASV)

SIMILITUDES — damah — "A verb meaning to be like, to compare, to resemble; to use parables, to plan, to think" (Zodhiates, CD).

In the simplest of terms, this passage is stating that the people of Israel were without excuse for their sins. They had been taught, admonished, and warned in many different ways. Now when the calamity comes, they cannot plead ignorance. This passage reminds one of other passages in the Scriptures.

"And He said, Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses" (Numbers 12:6-8)?

"GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1).

They had not sinned out of ignorance, but rather in obstinate rebellion to Him!

"The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy" (Amos 3:8)?

How had GOD spoken to them? In **"multiplied visions."** Were these pictures impressed on the mind's eye or through the physical eyes? Were they in dreams or while the prophet was awake? GOD had also spoken to them in **"similitudes."** A

similitude is a comparison, probably parables. It might also have included symbols, allegories, et cetera.

"Visions, miracles, predictions of the future and expositions of the Law were multiplied. Vividly arresting figures of speech, symbols, parables, metaphors, allegories, types, object-lessons were all used" (Butler, p. 565).

GOD had used every possible means to get the people of Israel to understand His messages to them, but they would not turn back from their course of destruction.

Hosea 12:11 **"Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields."**

"Is Gilead iniquity? they are altogether false; in Gilgal they sacrifice bullocks; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field." (ASV)

INIQUITIES — awen — *"This is a major Hebrew word for sin. It means vanity, breath, vainness, nothingness, falseness, falsehood, idol, idolatry, sin, wickedness, sorrow, distress, hardship, toil. The kjv translates the word with: iniquity, wicked, sorrow, vanity, wickedness, mourning, mourners, affliction, false, unjust. The word focuses upon the planning and expression of deception, pointing more to the consequences of sin"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning nothingness, trouble, sorrow, evil, or mischief. The primary meaning is that of emptiness and vanity"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 26).

VANITY — saw — *"It means nothingness, emptiness, vanity, anything which disappoints the hope which rests upon it; falsehood, lying, vainness, 'in vain', sin, wickedness, iniquity; calamity, destruction. The term designates anything which is insubstantial, unreal, or worthless (whether*

materially or morally)” (Zodhiates, CD); “A masculine noun meaning emptiness, vanity, evil, ruin, uselessness, deception, worthless, without result, fraud, deceit. The primary meaning of the word is deceit, lie, or falsehood” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1107).

“Is there iniquity in Gilead?” This question is not asked to cast doubt on whether there is or is not iniquity in Gilead. It is given to emphasize what follows, a strong condemnation of guilt. One of the meanings of **“iniquity”** is *“nothingness.”* Gilead, because of the sins of the people, will become a place of nothingness, i.e., there will be no habitation there, it will become a desolate place. Was there iniquity in Gilgal? There was nothing but iniquity in Gilgal.

The use of Gilgal and Gilead signifies that the whole land was guilty before GOD. These two names are used as a part for the whole — Gilead on the east side of Jordan and Gilgal on the west side.

“Yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows.” Their altars were everywhere; the land was full of them. Considering the heaps, this writer remembers as a boy that one of his jobs was to follow the plow and pick up the rocks as his father broke the ground. These rocks were placed in piles to be picked up later and deposited in a place where they would not be in the way. If these piles of rocks had been left in the field year after year, they would have been a hindrance to plowing and the use of the land. The point is that these piles needed to be removed in order allow the land to produce as much as it could. The altars Israel had placed all over the land were a hindrance to spiritual “production” in the land of Israel — they needed to be removed.

The picture also seems to be that these altars which were everywhere were about to be destroyed and be considered as nothing more than the useless piles they actually were. Note the play on words here. Gilead

means *“heap of stones”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 205). Gilead is as worthless and as harmful as a heap of stones in a field to be plowed. The picture is that everywhere one looked, he could see these monstrosities — these idols. This reminds this writer of the island of Bali, where altars to gods can be seen everywhere. Broken-down altars are like broken-down buildings — they both signify lack of habitation. The land would become desolate.

Hosea 12:12 “And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.”

“And Jacob fled into the field of Aram, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.” (ASV)

In Genesis 28ff, the full account of this passage can be found. Jacob’s brother, Esau, was determined to kill him. Isaac did not want Jacob to marry an idol worshipper as Esau had done. So Jacob was sent to Syria for the dual purpose of fleeing from his brother’s wrath and finding a wife from his own people. In the house of Laban, Jacob patiently spent years working with the flocks in order to gain his wives (Leah and Rachel). From these marriages came the twelve tribes of Israel. From a small beginning of one lowly servant, a great nation was begun. During all of this time, GOD had cared for and nurtured Jacob. Where is Israel’s gratitude for being taken from such humble beginnings to the lofty heights of a powerful nation? The people turned their backs on their benefactor.

Another consideration here is the value Jacob had placed on his wife. He had labored in the most grueling of circumstances, yet he remained faithful to GOD, trusting Him, and the end of his labors was attained. Considering this, had not GOD shown the value of His bride (the nation of Israel) and his tender unfailing love for her? Yet, unlike Jacob’s brides,

she had abandoned her husband for false lovers (idols). As determined as Jacob had been to attain his wife, should not Israel have been just as determined to seek and maintain her special relationship to GOD?

Hosea 12:13 “And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.”

“And by a prophet Jehovah brought Israel up out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.” (ASV)

The emphasis seems to be Israel’s dependency upon GOD to lead and care for her. Jacob had depended on GOD to lead and protect him, to care for him, and GOD greatly rewarded Him.

The prophet spoken of in this passage is of course Moses.

“Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Psalm 77:20).

GOD had raised up a prophet, a teacher for Israel. He groomed him and sent him to Egypt to deliver His people from their cruel bondage, to lead them to a land of milk and honey, a land of abundance.

“By listening to Moses, Israel found preservation from destruction in Egypt, from starvation in the wilderness, from their enemies who sought to hinder their march to Canaan, from spiritual aimlessness during the journey, and from the early traces of pagan religion along the way” (Graham, p. 236).

There seems to be a veiled image here of a shepherd leading and guiding his flock through a chosen representative. The shepherd gives advantages to his sheep, as seen in the quote of Graham. This is what GOD had done for Israel, not only through the great prophet Moses, but also through all of the prophets He had sent. But what did Ephraim do? He turned against his shepherd. The people ignored the prophets

GOD had sent them; they disobeyed Him.

“Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy GOD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:14-17).

Hosea 12:14 “Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall He leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.”

“Ephraim hath provoked to anger most bitterly: therefore shall his blood be left upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.” (ASV)

Through many rebellious acts, **Ephraim** had caused the anger which would now flow from GOD upon him. It should be emphasized that the anger GOD shows is not spur-of-the-moment anger. This anger has been produced over centuries by the ingratitude and constant rebellion of Israel. The crimes of the people, as pointed out by Hosea, were many: lying, cheating, shedding innocent blood, idolatry, et cetera (Hosea 4). Their sins all revolved around their idolatrous worship. Some of that worship was given to gods like Molech, which demanded human sacrifice — particularly the shedding of children’s

blood. Their numerous sins brought reproach on GOD's name in the same way David had.

“Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die” (2 Samuel 12:14).

It is often forgotten that when GOD's people sin against Him, they cause the unbeliever to revile GOD — to heap reproach upon Him. GOD was now going to return the reproach they brought upon him.

“Wherefore the LORD GOD of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before Me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Samuel 2:30, emphasis mine, RK).

“The children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their GOD, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep My

commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their GOD. And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their GOD, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only” (2 Kings 17:9-15).

One cannot help remembering the Jews of Jesus' day as they stood before Pilate. Jesus had previously told them, **“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not**

have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets” (Matthew 23:29-31). As they stood before Pilate, Pilate washed his hands saying, “**I am innocent of the blood of this just person**” (Matthew 27:24). Then note the ominous answer the Jews gave him: “**His blood be on us, and on our children**” (Matthew 27:25). It was but a few years later that they answered for the shedding of that innocent blood when Titus’ armies breached the walls and destroyed Jerusalem. Josephus states that the streets of Jerusalem ran with their blood. Further, look at the persecutions they have endured since that time — most notably the holocaust in Germany.

Hosea

Chapter Thirteen

Hosea 13:1 “**When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel;**

but when he offended in Baal, he died.”

“When Ephraim spake, there was trembling; he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.” (ASV)

TREMBLING — retet — “A masculine noun meaning trembling. It refers to an emotional response of fear or dread before a powerful person or group” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1082).

“When Ephraim spake trembling.”

The ASV reads, “When Ephraim spake, there was trembling.” This seems to indicate the power of Ephraim over the other tribes. At one time, the people of Ephraim held such an exalted position that the other tribes feared them and followed their lead. This can be observed when the ten tribes rebelled and established the northern kingdom — it was Ephraim who took the lead, and the other nine tribes followed her example. The power of Ephraim had been predicted by Israel as he lay on his death bed in Egypt (Genesis 48:18-20). It was from this tribe that the first king was chosen for the ten northern tribes. This has been thought by some to signify a time when Ephraim feared the Lord and trembled before His mighty throne.

When was Ephraim exalted? Noting the comment above, it started with the prediction that such would occur. Ephraim rose in prominence in the promised land, but what allowed her to do this? Was it not faithfulness to GOD and His will? No nation can rise to such prominence without GOD’s hand helping it do so. The question then becomes, “*Why did GOD raise the people of Ephraim to prominence among the tribes?*” Did He look ahead and see the unfaithfulness which would develop among the Israelites and choose them as the leader of the departed tribes? Or were they chosen to be prominent because of faithfulness, i.e., were they faithful in worship to GOD at the time of departure, before Jeroboam made the calves?

Since the word “trembling” means “fear of a person or group,” could it not mean that Ephraim was exalted before GOD because of its faithfulness? If exalted before GOD, then that one would be exalted (in this case) before all the tribes. If this is the correct understanding, then this verse shows a contrast between what the people had been (faithful to GOD) and what they had become (unfaithful to GOD). **“BUT when he offended in Baal he died”** (Emphasis mine, RK). The word “**but**” indicates a contrast, a contrast between what was and what is now the case.

It should be noted that, as bad as the worship of calves was, the worship of Baal was far worse. It should also be considered that the worship of Baal did not spring up overnight. The completion of sin never springs up overnight — it is always a slow but sure process. Ephraim’s sin began with the worship of the golden calves, which grew steadily stronger until Baal worship was introduced. Baal worship was introduced because Ahab made an alliance (covenant) with a foreign king (Ethbaal, 1 Kings 16:31). These alliances were often sealed through marriages. Ahab took Jezebel to wife, and she brought the gods of her land to Israel. But consider this — had not these gods already been introduced to the nation? Had not Solomon made alliances with the kings around him, sealing them by marriages to their daughters? And did not these wives bring their idols with them? Did not Solomon erect temples for his wives’ gods?

When Baal worship was introduced into the northern tribes as a national religion, Israel began to die. GOD has always promised death as a result of sin. Such was so in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:17), thus at the very beginning of time, this promise of death for sin was made. Death did not take place in the physical sense immediately — but the beginning of

death did. From that small beginning with Jezebel came a snow-ball effect until Baal worship consumed the nation.

“What folly Ephraim wrought when he bowed before his own creations, implored help from them, and thought his future was dependent on them. It was a pure work of the flesh, but it was no more so than the attempts of moderns to live, serve, and worship according to their own fleshly desires” (Graham, p. 241).

Hosea 13:2 “And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.”

“And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, even idols according to their own understanding, all of them the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.” (ASV)

“And now they sin more and more.”

Sins generally increase, i.e., one sin generally leads to another and then another, until one is consumed in sin. Once the people started worshipping the calves, it was not long until they worshipped other created things. The things they worshipped were either the things GOD made in nature or the things they created in their own imagination.

In what sin did they become more and more involved? They **“made them images of silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen.”** They made images after their own design with the materials GOD had given them. They turned His blessings into idolatry. That is will worship, which is condemned throughout the Bible (Colossians 2:23). Man must worship only

according to the will of GOD, or his worship is worthless! Idols come from the imagination of men when they search for GOD outside of His revelation of Himself. Consider how stupid it is to worship nature, i.e., the things of nature or nature as a whole. No animal or thing in nature can truly protect itself from destruction. No animal can build a hospital, a college, or any other useful thing. All idols are devised around something in nature; therefore, they cannot be GOD.

“Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.” The significance of the kiss in this passage is seen in the words of Pusey.

“Kissing was an act of homage in the East, done upon the hand or the foot, the knees or shoulder. It was a token of Divine honor, whether an idol (1 Kings 19:18) or to God (Psalm 2:12). It was performed, either by actually kissing the image, or when the object could not be approached, (as the moon) kissing the hand (Job 31:26-27), and so sending, as it were, the kiss to it” (p. 127).

They were foolish in thinking that something made with **their own hands** could possibly be their GOD! The maker can be the god of the thing created, but the thing created can never be the god of the one who made it.

Where had Israel learned calf-worship? Probably in Egypt, where *“two living bulls, Apis and Mnevis, were worshipped as symbols of Osiris and the sun at Memphis and Heliopolis”* (JFB, p. 504). These bulls were worshipped to the extent that, when one died, it was mummified just as would be done to a Pharaoh who died. Note the connection of calf worship in Egypt and Exodus 32:3, where Aaron made a golden calf for Israel to worship shortly after the people left Egypt. Also, note the similarity of language after Aaron and Jeroboam

made these calves.

“He received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:4).

“Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kings 12:28).

Hosea 13:3 “Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.”

“Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the dew that passeth early away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the threshing-floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.” (ASV)

This verse deals with what will happen to those who have turned to the idols — they will be dispersed. The morning cloud refers to what is commonly called fog and the dew to the moisture often found on the ground in the morning. Both of these quickly disappear when the hot sun rests upon them. It should be pointed out that both of these are good and helpful things. Yet they are minor in comparison to the benefits of rain. This seems to be a picture implying that what little good Israel had done was quick to dissipate and be turned to nothingness by her evil acts.

The chaff and smoke are two different items — of no value. The chaff is the thin casing found around the grain. At the threshing floor, the grain and chaff are

found together. After being beaten, they would be tossed into the air, where the chaff would be separated from the grain. The chaff was so light that the wind would catch it and blow it away, while the grain, because of its weight, would fall back to the floor. The smoke would pass through the window (chimney, Heb.) into the sky. Though seen for a few moments, it would quickly dissipate into the air until there would be nothing to show that it had ever existed. It might be noted that chimneys did not exist in homes during the time of Hosea. An opening in the wall near the fire would serve as means for the smoke to leave the dwelling, much like the American Indian’s teepee, which had a hole in the top for ventilation.

The point seems to be that Israel would quickly disappear from view like the four items mentioned. Why? At the least because the people were relatively worthless, at the worst because they were worthless, i.e., with no redeeming qualities.

“As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation” (Proverbs 10:25).

Hosea 13:4 “Yet I am the LORD thy GOD from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me: for there is no saviour beside Me.”

“Yet I am Jehovah thy GOD from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no god but Me, and besides Me there is no saviour.” (ASV)

GOD again reminded the people of Who had cared for them from the time they left Egypt until this date. No god of the Amorites, Hivites, or any other “ite” had cared for them. Who kept them fed, watered and clothed during this time? Who provided a system of worship which benefitted them? Who had protected them against their enemies — both domestic and

foreign? Who had conquered the promised land for them? Since that was the case, why should they seek after any other god who is no GOD?

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me” (Exodus 20:3-5).

GOD next reminded Israel that there is no one who is a Savior except Himself — **“There is no Saviour beside Me.”** GOD says, **“I am the ONLY Savior!”** GOD was not shy about proclaiming that there is only one GOD and only one religion — and neither should one today be afraid to proclaim such. Political correctness is not GOD correctness — it is Devil correctness! Notice some similar and powerful statements in Isaiah along these lines.

“Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even My witnesses. Is there a GOD beside Me? yea, there is no GOD; I know not any” (Isaiah 44:8).

“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no GOD else beside Me; a just GOD and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the

ends of the earth: for I am GOD, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:21-22).

Notice also that when GOD sent the Word into the world, He was given a descriptive name — Jesus. Matthew 1:21 shows what that name means. **“Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins”** (Emphasis mine, RK). The name **“Jesus”** means **“Savior.”** Note that GOD did not send Moses to save the world, nor Buddha, nor Mohammed — only Jesus was sent to save mankind.

“There was no savior in the golden calf, no savior in Baal, no savior in Moloch, no savior in any god worshiped by the nations surrounding Israel. Likewise there is no savior in Islam, Buddhism, or any eastern religion. There is no savior in the false cults of Christendom. There is no savior in a creed of good works. There is no savior in humanism or communism” (Phillips, p. 63).

Hosea 13:5 “I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.”

“I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.” (ASV)

GOD knew them in Egypt (v. 4), and He knew them in the wilderness (v. 5), a land of great drought. This is significant from the standpoint that GOD was trying to get them to remember who had cared for them during that time. He had cared for the Israelites, even though many times they expressed ingratitude and murmured against Him. If He could take care of them then, He could take care of them now. They would have perished time and again if GOD had not provided their basic needs. But they had forgotten or ignored these facts.

In the wilderness, GOD had provided

food and water for them — what they needed to maintain physical life. Today, the Lord provides every spiritual necessity man needs to get through the wilderness of sin.

“Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst”
(John 6:35).

Hosea 13:6 “According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me.”

*“According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten Me.”
(ASV)*

“According to their pasture, so were they filled.” This is the picture of sheep which had been led to abundant pasture where they could eat their fill in peace and security. This passage continues to point out the abundant care GOD had given Israel, but the people simply “could not stand prosperity.” The more they received from GOD, the more they departed from Him.

“They were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me.” They forgot from whence their blessings came, becoming proud. When pride fills a man, it is not long until he forgets about GOD. When man forgets GOD, his destruction is very near. This is the same situation in which Nebuchadnezzar found himself. He was filled with pride until GOD taught him humility by making him like a dumb animal (Daniel 4).

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's

crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward” (Isaiah 1:2-4).

“It is more difficult to bear prosperity than adversity” (Pusey, p. 129).

“Too often when the stomach is filled, the heart strays from God the Giver to the gift that He bestowed. Then is the attendant departure of the life from the divine way...Whatever the age and whatever the kind of employment, the tendency is for people whose lives are filled with the good things of God to turn their eyes away from him to themselves. The factor that has most often contributed to the unfaithfulness and eventual faithlessness of God's people has been their prosperity” (Graham, p. 244).

Hosea 13:7-8 “Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.”

“Therefore am I unto them as a lion; as a leopard will I watch by the way; I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart; and there will I devour them like a lioness; the wild beast shall tear them.” (ASV)

The lion is known for his fierceness and the leopard for his speed. Both animals will lie in wait to pounce swiftly upon their prey

at the opportune moment. The destruction of Israel is portrayed as being fierce and quick. One should never forget that GOD is a GOD of lovingkindness, but He is also a GOD of wrath and destruction to those who oppose Him. GOD had cared for the people of Israel as a loving shepherd, providing all their needs and protecting them on their journeys. Now He will be their destroyer.

The figure of GOD's fierceness is carried over into verse eight with the example of a she-bear who has been robbed of her cubs.

"They who have written on the nature of wild beasts, say that none is more savage than the she-bear, when she has lost her whelps or lacks food" (Jerome).

Strong says the word "**caul**" is from cegowr, which is defined as "*Shut up, i.e., the breast (as enclosing the heart).*" Once the outer covering of the heart (pericardim — membrane surrounding the heart) is ripped open, it leaves the tender heart fully exposed and most vulnerable to injury. How fearful a thing it is to know that Israel's heart was going to be fully exposed. Figuratively, this speaks of all the people's deeds being manifested — they would be seen for what they were.

"Fearful will be the day of Judgment, when the sinner's heart is laid open, with all the foul, cruel, malicious, defiled, thoughts which it harbored and concealed against the Will of God" (Pusey, p. 129).

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD" (Hebrews 10:31).

Hosea 13:9 "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help."

"It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against Me, against thy help." (ASV)

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," self-inflicted destruction. The

Israelites could not blame the Assyrians for their destruction, nor the idols — only themselves. Further, they certainly could not blame GOD, for He Himself was not the destroyer — the people of Israel were the destroyers. They had destroyed all of the goodness GOD had granted them. They had gradually withdrawn themselves from the protective hand of GOD until they had totally separated themselves from Him. Now they must suffer the consequences. This might be illustrated by the murderer who has been tried, convicted, and executed. Who executed him? It was not society; he executed himself through his own actions.

"He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death" (Proverbs 8:36).

"He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding" (Proverbs 15:32).

Another way to put this is that Israel committed suicide. Any man who rejects GOD commits suicide against his soul. It is man, not GOD, **who chooses** his eternal destiny.

Notice the contrast, it was man who was the destroyer, **"But in Me is thine help."** Man is a destroyer, GOD is a builder. GOD is the Father who is eagerly waiting to help His fallen son — all man has to do is ask for His help. As long as the prodigal son chose to remain in the land of sin, there was nothing the father could do to help him. It was only when the son came to his senses and turned back to the father's house that he could escape the consequences of sin (Luke 15:11ff).

"The sum of the meaning is, all our destruction is from ourselves; all our salvation is from God" (Pusey, p. 130).

Something else to be considered here is that GOD is doing this to Israel by permitting Assyria to conquer her. It is like what is seen in Job 2:3, 6. GOD took the blame for Job's destruction but did not actually cause it. Satan was allowed by GOD to physically destroy him physically.

Hosea 13:10 "I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?"

"Where now is thy king, that he may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?" (ASV)

Years before this, the people had rejected the leadership of GOD. They demanded a king, even though GOD warned them of the consequences of such a demand.

"Ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:18-20).

Now when they faced eminent danger, when their cities were being attacked and besieged, they would call upon GOD's help, but there would be no help coming — just as GOD's prophet predicted. (How many in every generation reject GOD's leadership until a crisis comes, and then they want Him to bail them out?) Where were these leaders now for whom they had pleaded? Could these kings, princes and judges (civil government) save them? Obviously not — America, nations of the world, are you listening?

Notice the reason for this question at this time. Their present king, Hoshea, was already the prisoner of Assyria.

"The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison" (2 Kings 17:4).

Hoshea could not help them; no earthly king or prince could help them. Their counselors and priests could not help them. Obviously, they could not help themselves. They had no true judges to help them, because they had rejected them for a king. One should also remind himself that in choosing Jeroboam as their king, they had rejected GOD's rule through David's lineage. Thus, twice they had rejected GOD's rule over them by demanding a king.

Hosea 13:11 "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath."

"I have given thee a king in Mine anger, and have taken him away in My wrath." (ASV)

Israel's asking for a king went all the way back to First Samuel, chapter eight. One of the lessons learned in that chapter is the lesson of free moral agency, i.e., GOD has given man the right to choose his course of action, even if his choice violates GOD's will (Consider the account of Balaam.). GOD did not want the people of Israel to have a physical king because: (1) He should have been their only king, and (2) these kings would corrupt the people. But the people were determined to have such a king, so GOD let them have him to their own hurt and eventual destruction. Man must keep this lesson ever before his mind. If one is determined to rebel against

GOD, be assured He will let man go — **Man has free choice; he is a free moral agent!**

Whether this passage speaks of the first king, Saul (taken away in the battle with the Philistines), or the last king of Israel, Hoshea (taken away by Shalmaneser), the end result is the same — GOD took away their king. Why? Rebellion to Him.

“Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

*“Both Keil and Laetsch argue that the use of imperfect tenses in the verbs **gave** and **took** here ‘denote an action that is repeated again and again, for which we should use the present, and refer to all the kings that the kingdom of the ten tribes had received, and was receiving still, and to their removal’ (Graham, p. 248).*

Hosea 13:12 **“The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.”**

“The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is laid up in store.” (ASV)

BOUND UP — sarar — *“A verb meaning to bind up, to tie up, to be distressed, to be troubled, to be oppressed, to be cramped...It is used figuratively of one’s life (soul) being bound in a bag” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 970).*

The idea of this passage is clearly seen in a parallel passage in Job 14:17.

“My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and Thou sewest up mine iniquity.”

Ephraim’s sins were not being forgotten. Instead, they were being stored up, like a man would store something valuable in a bag and seal it up to protect its contents from being lost.

Man often believes that, because punishment does not come swiftly upon him for his sins, there will be no punishment, or that GOD has forgotten his sins. Many seem to think GOD is like man, i.e., with time, GOD will forget his sin. This sometimes happens in the Lord’s church when sin is committed, and after a long time, the sinner sneaks back into the body of Christ as if nothing has happened. This passage and the one noted above in Job show that such is not the case with GOD. Far from forgetting man’s sins, GOD keeps the knowledge of them safely secured until the day of reckoning, when they will be brought out of the “bag” to receive their just reward. Can these transgressions, these sins, be brought out of the bag any other way? In a sense, they may be brought out of the bag and discarded (forgotten) by GOD — if, and only if, the sinner repents.

“Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

“Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of GOD leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and

revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with GOD” (Romans 2:4-11).

Hosea 13:13 “The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.”

“The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for it is time he should not tarry in the place of the breaking forth of children.” (ASV)

“The travail-pangs are violent, sudden, irresistible. A moment before they come, all is seemingly perfect health; they come, increase in vehemence, and, if they accomplish not that for which they are sent, end in death, both to the mother and the child. Such are God’s chastisements. If they end not in the repentance of the sinner, they continue on in his destruction. But never is man more secure, than just before the last and final throe comes upon him” (Pusey, p. 132).

The picture is drawn of a son who has the opportunity of choosing whether to stay in the womb or come forth into the light of

day. If he should have this option, he would be most foolish to remain in the womb, for this would bring death to both. Ephraim had a choice — he chose to remain in his sinful state instead of breaking forth in repentance to a new day. Time had run out!

Jumping ahead to the New Testament, note how many refused the new birth (John 3:1-5; Acts 2). They are like the child figuratively viewed in the present text, who refused life by remaining in its former abode. When man refuses to be born again, he remains in the womb of sin where only death awaits.

Note also the following thought of Graham in his commentary on this verse.

“From the analogy of God’s fatherhood and Israel’s sonship, we learn that even ideal fathers sometimes have unwise sons, without any fault on the father’s part. It is true, of course, that unwise fathers who act impatiently, overbearingly, unnecessarily sharply, unlovingly, or unconcerned encourage their children to be unwise. Not all “problem children,” however, are the result of failed parents” (p. 251).

Hosea 13:14 “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes.”

“I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death: O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destruction? repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes.” (ASV)

Here is a passage which has troubled many students of the Bible, for they fail to see the necessity of the hope this verse brings in the midst of some of the worst

condemnations found in the Bible. This verse is no doubt speaking of the ultimate victory of GOD in all His plans, which is symbolized by His victory over death. Note the words of the apostle Paul here.

“When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

When the text states **“repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes,”** it simply means that GOD is not going to change His mind, i.e., His plans for the redemption of mankind. Though the ten tribes shall be dispersed throughout the world, there will still be the bringing forth of the One who would pay the ransom price to redeem man. It would come through Judah.

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

It is repeated — this verse was sorely needed amidst all this strong condemnation for hope to continue.

Hosea 13:15 **“Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.”**

“Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the breath of Jehovah coming up from the wilderness; and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall make spoil of the treasure of all goodly vessels.” (ASV)

“Though he be fruitful among his brethren.” There is a play on words with

regard to the word **“fruitful.”** The name Ephraim means *“double fruitful.”* Jacob had predicted: **“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well”** (Genesis 49:22). Ephraim was one of the two sons of Joseph, thus predicted to be fruitful.

Note that in the above quote, Ephraim’s fruitfulness is tied to a well. As long as water is found in the well, then the crops could flourish. However, **“an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up.”** The wrath and destruction found in the invasion of Assyria is described like the wind (sirocco), which came from the Arabian desert. This wind was a terrible blight which dried up everything in its path, destroying all vegetation, and nothing could be done to stop it. The life-giving well would be dried up, and Ephraim would no longer be fruitful. Ephraim’s resources would be exhausted.

“He shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.” The **“he”** is the instrument GOD will use to bring the much-deserved punishment upon Ephraim — Shalmaneser. Israel had appeared to be successful, but appearances were deceiving.

Hosea 13:16 **“Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her GOD: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.”**

“Samaria shall bear her guilt; for she hath rebelled against her GOD: they shall fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.” (ASV)

“Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her GOD.” Samaria, the capital from which all of the

rebellion originated represents the nation. What would happen to Israel? She would become desolate — barren, destroyed, depopulated. Why? The sin of rebellion. What does it mean to rebel against GOD?

“To rebel against God is to declare oneself his equal or superior in wisdom and moral excellence, thus unmoved by his superiority”(Graham, p. 253).

Rebellion against GOD’s authority has been the recurrent theme throughout this book. Little wonder then that, at the close of Hosea, rebellion is emphasized. Should not this letter be a warning to people of any generation that it is a very serious thing to rebel against GOD?

“They shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.” What a horrible description is given of the terror tactics of the Assyrians. These cruelties are almost beyond one’s imagination and show the extreme suffering which befell the nation. Unfortunately, such cruelties are nothing new and even exist in “modern” times.

“Elisha foretold to Hazael that he would perpetuate both cruelties (2 Kings 7:12), Shalmaneser dashed young children in pieces (Hosea 10:14), as did the conqueror of No-Ammon (Nah. 3:10), and the Babylonians (Psalm 137:9), afterward. The children of Ammon ripped up the women with child in Gilead (Amos 1:13), and the usurper Manahem in Tiphseh and its coasts (2 Kings 15:16). Isaiah prophesies that Babylon would undergo, in its turn, the same as to its children (Isaiah 13:16), and the Psalmist pronounces God’s blessing on its destroyer who should requite him (Psalm 137:9)” (Pusey, p. 134).

History adequately documents the atrocities

mentioned in this text. Such cruelties are often found in times of war in any age. What is the result of Israel’s pride and rebellion? Total destruction of the nation.

Hosea

Chapter Fourteen

Hosea — Chapter Fourteen

Hosea 14:1 **“O Israel, return unto the LORD thy GOD; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.”**

“O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy GOD; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” (ASV)

FALLEN — *kasal* — “*To totter, stumble, stagger; to faint; to fall; to become weak; to cause to fall; to seduce, lead astray; to be overthrown; to be felled*”(Zodhiates, CD); “*A verb meaning to stumble, to stagger, to totter, to cause to stumble, to overthrow, to make weak*”(Baker/Carpenter, p. 529).

Note the call to return, i.e., to repent. The door of destruction is so close to being opened upon them; yet, GOD calls for the Israelites to repent. Can one “return” who has never left? This may seem to be a simple question, but it is an important one. These were GOD’s chosen people who had turned away from GOD; they had left him.

Can a child of GOD turn away from Him? Obviously, the answer is yes!

“Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.”

There is a commercial for a medical device in case one falls and cannot get up. The person who has fallen is not dead, or else he would not be able to say, “*Help, I have fallen and cannot get up!*” The primary meanings of the Hebrew word here are “stumbling” or “tottering.” The people of Israel had not reached a point of absolute destruction, for if they had, there would be no call by the Spirit for them to come back. With all the threats of destruction which have been found in this book, at the end there is still the call to repent.

Some view this call for repentance to be for future generations at the time of the Christian age. It is this writer’s view that it was for that specific time in which Hosea lived. Hosea next tells his people how they can accomplish the needed repentance.

Hosea 14:2 **“Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.”**

“Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips.” (ASV)

Coupled with the rest of the writings of Hosea, this passage clearly shows that there is more to serving GOD than sacrifice.

“Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.” From where do words come? From the heart. While it is true that one with an evil heart may speak good words meant to deceive, these are to be words spoken from a true heart. A recognition must be had by the petitioner that he cannot deceive GOD; therefore, it is senseless to try such. When the heart is not right, neither will one’s

actions be right.

“He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain My words: keep My commandments, and live” (Proverbs 4:4).

“Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man” (Matthew 15:18).

“Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge” (Proverbs 23:7).

“Take with you words.” Is this a reference to the time in captivity when the people will no longer have the means or possibly not be allowed by their captors to offer the animal sacrifices? Or is this a reference to the Christian dispensation, when animal sacrifices are no longer required or acceptable?

For what should one ask the Lord? (1) **“Take away all iniquity”** and (2) **“Receive us graciously.”** If man wishes to receive a full measure of the blessings of GOD, iniquity must first be removed from him. Such removal can only come from GOD. The words **“take away all iniquity”** is a recognition on the part of the one who utters them that he has sinned (not “if” I have sinned or “might” have sinned). With regard to asking for forgiveness, one should study the Psalms, which are full of petitions recognizing sin in one’s life and asking for forgiveness. It is this writer’s belief that if one wishes to learn how to pray, he ought to study the prayer life of the psalmists.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him

a liar, and His word is not in us”

(1 John 1:8-10).

To **“receive us graciously”** is to accept as good and beneficial. Does this mean that after repentance one desires GOD to look upon him in this way? Or does it mean that one desires GOD to receive his offering as good?

“So will we render the calves of our lips.” This phrase deals with prayers which, when offered correctly, are a sacrifice to GOD. How is this true?

“True praise and thanksgiving is a sacrifice to GOD, because it empties self of any estimate of self-worth or honor and gives honor to God” (Graham, p. 256).

The animal sacrifices they had offered were meaningless, because they did not come from a heart dedicated to obeying GOD. They had offered those sacrifices from a feeling of necessity or habit rather than true love of GOD. Likewise prayers, if they come from a sense of necessity, are nothing more than empty words. Pleas for forgiveness, if they are not from the heart, are worthless words. To make one’s sacrifices to GOD acceptable, to make his prayers acceptable, requires a life of consistent fidelity to GOD.

Note the application of the above phrase in Hebrews 13:15-16.

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:15-16).

Hosea 14:3 **“Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy.”**

“Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods; for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy.” (ASV)

“Asshur will not save us.” The term **“Asshur”** is another word for Assyria. The significance is that they would no longer put their trust in human beings, particularly another nation or even their own secular government. They had formerly placed a great deal of trust in political alliances, but when the opportune moment came, their so-called allies turned on them and sought their destruction.

“We will not ride upon horses.” The horse is often used as a symbol of power. Often kings would consider their military strength by the number of war horses they could bring into battle. GOD had warned Israel through Moses not to multiply horses for her defence but rather to rely upon GOD as her true source of strength (Deuteronomy 17:16).

“There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength” (Psalm 33:16-17).

“The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD” (Proverbs 21:31).

“Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods.” If it was folly to rely upon GOD’s creatures (whether human or animal), how much more was it foolish to rely upon something man made for safety, deliverance and blessings.

“For in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy.” Note the wide range of meanings for the Hebrew word raham (mercy) here.

“A feminine noun meaning womb, compassion, mercy, affection, maiden. The singular form of this word always signified the physical

womb of a woman and was commonly used in this way. Yet when the plural form was used, the author had in mind the idea of compassion, tenderness, or mercy. The Old Testament authors thought of the womb or bowels as the seat of warm and tender emotions” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1048).

Israel, without GOD, is likened to a fatherless child, and so it is with any human being. The fatherless child is without protection and cannot depend on mercy. Only GOD can provide man with true protection and the tender mercy he needs. Israel is being cautioned to turn back to GOD, to the only one who truly loves her and can provide for her needs.

“The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek Him: your heart shall live for ever” (Psalm 22:26).

“Let all those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee: let such as love Thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified” (Psalm 40:16).

Hosea 14:4 **“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.”**

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.” (ASV)

Verse four begins a section which describes GOD’s forgiveness and blessings to be bestowed upon those who repent. It must be noted that the order for forgiveness has already been established. It is not GOD saying, *“OK, I think I will forgive you without any preconditions.”* No one can have forgiveness until he first recognizes his sinful condition and then repents. Further, true repentance is more than simple words. When true repentance

(change of mind) takes place, that change of mind will lead to actions which demonstrate the change of mind. Too many associate the word “repentance” with a change of action. Actions may change without any real repentance. A change of action is always the result of a change of mind first.

“I will heal their backsliding.” Backsliding is a common problem with human beings. Backsliding results when people forget that GOD is the one through Whom all blessings flow. When these things are forgotten, man begins to forget or ignore the commands of GOD and slides into following the ways of the world. In considering these things, man should remember to pay attention to history. It is true that those who ignore the lessons of history are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. Christians must not forget the lessons of the Old Testament and the people of GOD and how GOD dealt with them.

“I will love them freely.” When will GOD freely love them? When they turn back to Him. The term **“freely”** carries the idea of “liberally,” i.e., giving above measure. When human beings love another, they want only the best for that one they love; they seek only the best for him/her and will go the second mile to give him/her the best. Being true of human beings, how much more does a gracious GOD overflow the cup of blessings He bestows? That overflowing love was demonstrated by Him when He sent the Word into the world to die on the cross, not for any transgression He had committed, but in man’s place because of the sins he committed.

“For My anger is turned away from him.” When repentance takes place, GOD’s anger is turned away from him. Anger carries with it the idea of punishment. GOD’s anger is expressed because of rebellion. When that anger is removed, it is

not a gradual thing; it is immediate. Nor does GOD’s removal of anger allow for holding a grudge or estrangement, as is often the case with human beings. When GOD turns His anger away, all is completely and immediately forgiven, and sweet fellowship is immediately restored — not as man is prone to do, i.e., gradually and with reservation.

“Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people, Thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath: Thou hast turned Thyself from the fierceness of Thine anger” (Psalm 85:2-3).

Hosea 14:5 “I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.”

“I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.” (ASV)

The land of Canaan is a very dry area. Because of this, the lack of dew is a very serious thing. Without the dew, the land, vegetation, animals and human beings will suffer. Dew refreshes plant life after the days of hot, burning sunshine. GOD is drawing a picture of providing the **“dew”** which refreshes man and sustains him.

“In the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, where rain does not fall for the six months from May through October, the abundance of dew offers moisture especially needed after the scorching heat of daytime” (Graham, p. 259).

When GOD provides the **“dew,”** then **“he shall grow as the lily,”** *“blossom as the lily”* (ASV). The lily grows straight and blossoms into a beautiful flower with a very sweet-smelling fragrance. When the people turned to GOD, accepting His forgiveness, He would make them as beautiful and pure as the lily appears.

Israel would not simply be an outward show of beauty, he would **“cast forth his roots as Lebanon.”** This appears to be referring to the roots of the cedars of Lebanon. Jerome said the *“trees of Lebanon (especially the cedars), which cast down their roots as deeply as their height upwards; so that they are immovable”* (JFB, p. 508). The trees of Lebanon became a symbol of strength and stability, rarely being blown over by the winds.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”
(Ephesians 4:14-15).

Note that the stability of any tree is not outwardly seen. It is that which is deep in the earth which gives it stability. Likewise, man’s strength comes from that which is not seen — the soul that is nourished by GOD’s Word.

After turning to GOD, men have both true beauty and strength, because He alone can provide these qualities. Someone has fitly said that beauty is not determined by the outward but rather the inward. The cleansing and strengthening of the inward man is truly what is beautiful in GOD’s sight.

Hosea 14:6 “His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.”

“His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.” (ASV)

“His branches shall spread;’ that is, his influence will be extended to and felt by others. His beauty shall be as the olive tree, fruitful and precious, highly prized by the people of the

land. ‘The smell of Lebanon’ indicates the constant freshness and fragrance as of the trees and herbs of the mountain” (Hailey, p. 183).

*“Three different qualities of the people are here figuratively described: (1) spreading influence on others in the spreading **branches**; (2) pleasing effect in the **beauty of the olive tree**; and (3) invigorating, beneficial effect upon others in the fragrance like **Lebanon**. Those healed by God are here portrayed as having a positive effect on others”* (Graham, p. 259).

Hosea 14:7 “They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.”

“They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.” (ASV)

“They that dwell under his shadow shall return.” The question becomes “Who is the **“his?”** Is it GOD or Israel? If it is GOD, then it would indicate all those who in repentance return to Him. If it is Israel, then it refers to those who would return to receive the blessings which would come through Israel. One cannot help but remember the reference to Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel and the mighty tree which benefitted all who took shelter in and under it. Israel has indeed benefitted the world through the Messiah. But the greatest benefit for man is through spiritual Israel (the church).

“For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac

shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of GOD: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (Romans 9:6-8).

A main concern of this verse is the idea of growth — **“revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.”** The corn appears dead, or must die, before it can grow into a stalk which will produce itself many times over. Man in sin must die to sin and accept the blessings of GOD in order to be fruitful. One of the major complaints against Israel was the fact that she had not been fruitful (10:1). The people had not pleased GOD with their service or sacrifices. The man of GOD must be a living sacrifice, because it is his reasonable service after receiving the benefits of GOD’s mercy and grace.

Hosea 14:8 **“Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.”**

“Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have answered, and will regard him: I am like a green fir-tree; from me is Thy fruit found.” (ASV)

“Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?” What a different attitude expressed here compared to their former attitude. Formerly they had spent their time, energies and resources on the idols, giving little or no heed to GOD. In the midst of chastisement, they learn to turn humbly back to GOD; they learn that He is the only true source of blessings.

Here is GOD’s response to their change in attitude. **“I have heard him, and observed him.”** Note first of all that when they penitently cry out to GOD, He hears their cry. This should be a great comfort to man to know that GOD longingly desires to hear from His creation. Not only does He long to hear, He obviously stands ready to

hear and does hear. Further, He is observing His creation. GOD is interested in His creation! He is like the father in Luke 15 who is looking for and longing for the wayward son to return to him.

“I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.” GOD likens Himself to a tree containing life and fruit — a place of safety and blessings. This is true because He provides everything man needs for his spiritual well-being.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

Hosea 14:9 **“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”**

“Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? for the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein.” (ASV)

The book of Hosea ends by giving the reader a choice — obey GOD and reap the benefits, or disobey GOD and reap destruction.

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the

knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:9-10).

“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD” (John 7:17).

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Peter 2:7-8).

“Notice that he did not address those wise in their own eyes or those wise in the wisdom of the world. Both self-centeredness and worldly wisdom, in fact, serve as barriers to hearing and heeding divine wisdom” (Graham, p. 262).

GOD’s ways are always right, and He alone must be heeded by those whose goal is to attain Heaven.

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