

Hosea

Superscription

1:1¹ This is the word of the LORD which was revealed to Hosea² son of Beeri during the time when³ Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah ruled Judah,⁴ and during the time when Jeroboam son of Joash⁵ ruled Israel.⁶

Symbols of Sin and Judgment: The Prostitute and Her Children

1:2 When the LORD first spoke⁷ through⁸ Hosea, he⁹ said to him,¹⁰ “Go marry¹¹ a prostitute¹² who will bear illegitimate children conceived through prostitution,¹³ because the nation¹⁴ continually commits spiritual prostitution¹⁵ by turning away from¹⁶ the LORD.”

¹ **tc** The textual problems in Hosea are virtually unparalleled in the OT. The Masoretic Text (MT), represented by the Leningrad Codex (c. A.D. 1008), which served as the basis for both *BHK* and *BHS*, and the Aleppo Codex (c. A.D. 952), are textually corrupt by all accounts and have a multitude of scribal errors. Many medieval Masoretic mss preserve textual variants that differ from the Leningrad and Aleppo Codices. The Qumran materials (4QXII^{c-d}) contain numerous textual variants that differ from the MT; unfortunately, these texts are quite fragmentary (frequently in the very place that an important textual problem appears). The textual tradition and translation quality of the LXX and the early Greek recensions (Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion) is mixed; in some places they are inferior to the MT but in other places they preserve a better reading. The textual apparatus of *BHK* and *BHS* contains many proposed emendations based on the ancient versions (Greek, Syriac, Latin, Aramaic) that often appear to be superior readings than what is preserved in the MT. In numerous cases, the MT readings are so difficult morphologically, syntactically, and contextually that conservative conjectural emendations are necessary to make sense of the text. Most major English versions (e.g., KJV, ASV, RSV, NEB, NAB, NASB, NIV, TEV, NKJV, NJPS, NJB, NRSV, REB, NCV, CEV, NLT) adopt (either occasionally or frequently) textual variants reflected in the versions and occasionally adopt conservative conjectural emendations proposed in *BHK* and/or *BHS*. However, many of the textual problems in Hosea are so difficult that the English versions frequently are split among themselves. With this in mind, the present translation of Hosea must necessarily be viewed as only preliminary. Further work on the text and translation of Hosea is needed, not only in terms of the NET Bible but in Hosea studies in general. The text of Hosea should be better clarified when the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project completes work on the book of Hosea. For further study of textual problems in Hosea, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:228-71.

² **tn** *Heb* “The word of the LORD which was to Hosea.” The words “This is” are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

³ **tn** *Heb* “in the days of” (again later in this verse). Cf. NASB “during the days of”; NIV “during the reigns of”; NLT “during the years when.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”

⁵ **sn** *Joash* is a variation of the name Jehoash. Some English versions use “Jehoash” here (e.g., NIV, NCV, TEV, NLT).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel.”

⁷ **tn** The construct noun תְּחִלָּת (ʾ^l*khillat*, “beginning of”) displays a wide use of the construct state here, preceding a perfect verb דִּבֶּר (*dibber*, “he spoke”; Piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular) rather than a genitive noun. This is an unusual temporal construction (GKC 422 §130.d). It may be rendered, “When he (= the LORD) began to speak” (cf. ASV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, TEV, and most other modern English versions, all of which are similar). This time-determinative was not correctly understood by the LXX or by the KJV: “The beginning of the word of the LORD.”

⁸ **tn** The preposition בְּ (*bet*) בְּרוֹשֵׁעַ (*b^lhoshea*) is an instrumental use of the preposition (BDB 89 s.v. בְּ III.2.b): “by, with, through Hosea” rather than a directional “to Hosea.” This focuses on the entire prophetic revelation through Hosea to Israel.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” This is redundant in English, so the pronoun has been used in the translation (cf. TEV, NLT).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “to Hosea.” The proper name is replaced by the pronoun here to avoid redundancy in English (cf. NIV, NCV, NLT).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Go, take for yourself” (so NRSV; NASB, NIV “to yourself”). In conjunction with the following phrase this means “marry.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “a wife of harlotries.” The noun זְנוּנִים (*z^lnunim*) means “prostitute; harlot” (HALOT 275-76 s.v. זְנוּנִים). The term does not refer to mere adultery (cf. NIV; also NCV, TEV, CEV “unfaithful”) which is expressed by the root נָאֵף (*na’af*, “adultery”; HALOT 658 s.v. נָאֵף). The plural noun זְנוּנִים (*z^lnunim*, literally, “harlotries”) is an example of the plural of character or plural of repeated behavior. The phrase “wife of harlotries” (זְנוּנִים) (*eshet z^lnunim*) probably refers to a prostitute, possibly a temple prostitute serving at a Baal temple.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “and children of harlotries.” However, TEV takes the phrase to mean the children will behave like their mother (“your children will be just like her”).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the land.” The term “the land” is frequently used as a synecdoche of container (the land of Israel) for the contained (the people of Israel).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “prostitution.” The adjective “spiritual” is supplied in the translation to clarify that apostasy is meant here. The construction זָנְהָ תִזְנֶה (*z^lnah tizneh*, infinitive absolute + imperfect of the same root) repeats the root זָנְהָ (*z^lnah*, “harlotry”) for rhetorical emphasis. Israel was guilty of gross spiritual prostitution by apostatizing from Yahweh. The verb זָנְהָ is used in a concrete sense to refer to a spouse being unfaithful in a marriage relationship (HALOT 275 s.v. זָנְהָ 1), and figuratively meaning “to be unfaithful” in a relationship with God by prostituting oneself with other gods and worshiping idols (Exod 34:15; Lev 17:7; 20:5, 6; Deut 31:16; Judg 8:27, 33; 21:17; 1 Chr 5:25; Ezek 6:9; 20:30; 23:30; Hos 4:15; Ps 106:39; see HALOT 275 s.v. 2).

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “from after.”

1:3 So Hosea married⁴ Gomer, the daughter of Di-blaim. Then she conceived and gave birth to a son for him. 1:4 Then the LORD said to Hosea,² “Name him ‘Jezreel,’ because in a little while I will punish³ the dynasty⁴ of Jehu on account of the bloodshed⁵ in the valley of Jezreel,⁶ and I will put an end to the kingdom⁷ of Israel.⁸ 1:5 At that time,⁹ I will destroy the military power¹⁰ of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.”

1:6 She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD¹¹ said to him, “Name her ‘No Pity’ (Lo-Ruhamah) because I will no longer have pity¹² on the nation¹³ of Israel.

¹ **tn** Heb “so he went and took” (וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח, *vayyelekh vayy-ikkakh*; so NAB, NRSV).

² **tn** Heb “to him.” The referent (Hosea) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** Heb “I will visit.” The verb פָּקַד (*paqad*, “to visit”) has a very broad range of meanings: (1) “to pay attention to; to look at” (a) favorably: to look after; to provide for; to care for; (b) unfavorably: to seek vengeance for; to punish for; (2) militarily: (a) “to muster; to enroll”; (b) “to inspect; to review”; (3) leadership: (a) “to rule over; to oversee”; (b) Hiphil: “to appoint an overseer” (see BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד; HALOT 955-58 s.v. פָּקַד). In this context, the nuance “to punish” or “to take vengeance” (see 1b above) is most appropriate. Cf. KJV, ASV “I will avenge”; NAB, NASB, NRSV “I will punish.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “house” (so NAB, NRSV); NCV “family”; CEV “descendants.”

⁵ **tn** The plural form of דָּם (*dam*, “blood”) refers to “bloodshed” (BDB 196 s.v. דָּם 2.f). This is an example of a plural of abnormal condition (GKC 400 §124.n). The plural is used to represent natural objects which are found in an unnatural or abnormal condition. The plural is used because the natural object is normally found as a whole or in one unit, but in the abnormal condition the object is found in many parts. Normally, blood is contained as a whole within the body. However, when a brutal murder occurs, blood is shed and literally spilled all over the place. Cf. NIV “the massacre”; TEV, CEV, NLT “the murders.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “I will visit the bloodshed of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “the kingdom of the house of Israel” (so NAB, NASB, NRSV). This has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

⁸ **sn** The proper name יִזְרְעֵאל (*yizre'el*, “Jezreel”) sounds like יִשְׂרָאֵל (*yisra'el*, “Israel”). This phonetic wordplay associates the sin at Jezreel with the judgment on Israel, stressing poetic justice.

⁹ **tn** Heb “In that day” (so NIV; NAB, NRSV “On that day”).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “I will break the bow” (so NAB, NRSV). The phrase “break the bow” (שָׁבַרְתִּי אֶת־קֶשֶׁת, *shavartī et-qeshet*) is figurative. The term קֶשֶׁת (*qeshet*, “bow”) frequently refers to the warrior’s weapon (2 Sam 22:35; Ps 18:35; Job 20:24; Hos 2:20; Zech 9:10; 10:4). The reference to the warrior’s bow is a synecdoche of specific (bow) for general (military weaponry or power; see HALOT 1155 s.v. קֶשֶׁת 3). The noun קֶשֶׁת is used figuratively for “power” several times (e.g., Gen 49:24; 1 Sam 2:4; Jer 49:35; Job 29:20; Ps 37:15; BDB 906 s.v. 1.e).

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Then he said”; the referent (the LORD) does not appear in Hebrew, but has been specified in the translation for clarity. Many English versions specify the speaker here (KJV “God”; ASV “Jehovah”; NASB, NIV, NRSV “the Lord”).

¹² **tn** The negative particle לֹא (*lo*’, “no, not”) and the root רָחַם (*rakhām*, “compassion”) are repeated in 1:6, creating a wordplay between the name Lo-Ruhamah (literally “No-Pity”) and the announcement of divine judgment, “I will no longer have pity on the nation of Israel.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “house”; cf. TEV, NLT “the people of Israel.”

For¹⁴ I will certainly not forgive¹⁵ their guilt.¹⁶ 1:7 But I will have pity on the nation¹⁷ of Judah.¹⁸ I will deliver them by the LORD their God; I will not deliver them by the warrior’s bow, by sword, by military victory,¹⁹ by chariot horses, or by chariots.²⁰

1:8 When²¹ she had weaned ‘No Pity’ (Lo-Ruhamah) she conceived again and gave birth to another son. 1:9 Then the LORD²² said: “Name him ‘Not My People’ (Lo-Amami), because you²³ are not my people and I am not your²⁴ God.”²⁵

¹⁴ **tn** The particle כִּי (*ki*) probably denotes cause (so NCV, TEV, CEV) or result here (GKC 505 §166.b; BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 3.c).

¹⁵ **tn** The verb נָשָׂא (*nasa*’, “to take away”) frequently denotes “to forgive” meaning to take away sin (BDB 671 s.v. נָשָׂא 3.c). The construction נָשָׂא אֲשֶׁר (*naso’ esa*’, “I will certainly take away,” infinitive absolute + imperfect of the same root) repeats the root נָשָׂא for rhetorical emphasis, stressing the divine resolution not to forgive Israel.

¹⁶ **tn** The phrase “their guilt” does not appear in Hebrew, but is supplied in the translation for clarification. The ellipsis of the accusative direct object of נָשָׂא (*naso’ esa*’, “I will certainly take away”) is an example of brachyology. The accusative “guilt” must be supplied frequently with נָשָׂא (see BDB 671 s.v. נָשָׂא 3.c; e.g., Num 14:19; Isa 2:9; Ps 99:8). Many recent English versions simplify this to “forgive them” (e.g., NASB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, NLT).

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “house”; cf. NCV, TEV, NLT “the people of Judah.”

¹⁸ **tn** The word order in this line is rhetorical, emphasizing the divine decision to withhold pity from Israel but to bestow it on Judah. The accusative direct object, which is introduced by a disjunctive *vav* (to denote contrast), appears before the verb: וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶרְחַם (*et-bet y’huddah arakhem*, “but upon the house of Judah I will show pity”).

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “by war” (so NAB, NRSV, TEV); KJV, NASB, NIV “battle.”

²⁰ **sn** These military weapons are examples of the metonymy of adjunct (the specific weapons named) for subject (warfare).

²¹ **tn** The preterite וַתִּגְמַל (*vatigmol*, literally, “and she weaned”) functions in a synchronic sense with the following preterite וַתַּהַר (*vatahar*, literally, “and she conceived”) and may be treated in translation as a dependent temporal clause: “When she had weaned...she conceived” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV). Other English versions render this as sequential with “After” (NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT).

²² **tn** Heb “Then he said”; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity. As in v. 6, many English versions specify the speaker here.

²³ **tn** The independent personal pronoun אַתָּם (*’attēm*, “you”) is a plural form, referring to the people of Israel as a whole. To make this clear TEV translates this as third person: “the people of Israel are not my people” (cf. CEV, NLT).

²⁴ **tn** The pronominal suffix on the preposition לַכֶּם (*lakhem*, “your”) is a plural form, referring to the people of Israel as a whole.

²⁵ **tc** The MT reads לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לַכֶּם (*lo’-ehyeh lakhem*, “I will not be yours”). The editors of BHS suggest emending the text to לֹא־אֶלֹהֵיכֶם (*lo’-elohekhem*, “I will not be your God”). The emendation creates a tighter parallel with the preceding אַתָּם לֹא עַמִּי (*’attēm lo’ ammi*, “you are not my people”). Because of a lack of external evidence, however, the reading of the MT should be retained.

tn Heb “I am not yours.” The divine name “God” is supplied in the translation for clarity even though the reading of the MT is followed (see previous **tc** note). Almost all English versions (including KJV, ASV, NASB) supply “God” here.

sn This is an allusion to Yahweh’s promise to Moses אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ (*ehyeh immakh*, “I will be with you”; Exod 3:12, 14). In effect, it is a negation of Exod 3:12, 14 and a cancellation of Israel’s status as vassal of Yahweh in the conditional Mosaic covenant.

The Restoration of Israel

1:10 (2:1)¹ However,² in the future the number of the people³ of Israel will be like the sand of the sea which can be neither measured nor numbered. Although⁴ it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it will be said to them, “You are⁵ children⁶ of the living God!” **1:11** Then the people⁷ of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together. They will appoint for themselves one leader,⁸ and will flourish in the land.⁹ Certainly,¹⁰ the day of Jezreel will be great! **2:1** Then you will call¹¹ your¹² brother, “My People” (Ammi)! You will call your sister, “Pity” (Ruhamah)!

Idoltrous Israel Will Be Punished Like a Prostitute

2:2 Plead earnestly¹³ with your¹⁴ mother

(for¹⁵ she is not my wife, and I am not her husband), so that¹⁶ she might put an end to her adulterous lifestyle,¹⁷ and turn away from her sexually immoral behavior.¹⁸

2:3 Otherwise, I will strip her naked, and expose her like she was when she was born.

I will turn her land into a wilderness and make her country a parched land, so that I might kill¹⁹ her with thirst.

2:4 I will have no pity on her children,²⁰ because they are children conceived in adultery.²¹

2:5 For their mother has committed adultery;

she who conceived them has acted shamefully.

For she said, “I will seek out²² my lovers;²³

they are the ones who give me my bread and my water,

1 sn Beginning with **1:10**, the verse numbers through **2:23** in the English Bible differ by two from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (*BHS*), with **1:10** ET = **2:1** HT, **1:11** ET = **2:2** HT, **2:1** ET = **2:3** HT, etc., through **2:23** ET = **2:25** HT. Beginning with **3:1** the verse numbers in the English Bible and the Hebrew Bible are again the same.

2 tn The *vav* prefixed to וְהָיָה (*v^haya*) functions in an adverbial sense: “however” (see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 71, §432).

3 tn Heb “sons” (so NASB); KJV, ASV “the children”; NAB, NIV “the Israelites.”

4 tn Heb “in the place” (בְּמָקוֹם [*bimqom*]). BDB 880 s.v. מָקוֹם 7.b suggests that בְּמָקוֹם (preposition בְּ, *bet*, + noun מָקוֹם, *maqom*) is an idiom carrying a concessive sense: “instead of” (e.g., Isa 33:21; Hos 2:1). However, HALOT suggests that it functions in a locative sense: “in the same place” (HALOT 626 s.v. מָקוֹם 2b; e.g., 1 Kgs 21:19; Isa 33:21; Hos 2:1).

5 tn The predicate nominative, “You are...,” is supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

6 tn Heb “sons” (so KJV, NASB, NIV).

7 tn Heb “sons” (twice in this verse, so NASB); KJV, ASV “children”; NIV, NRSV, TEV “people.”

8 tn Heb “head” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV).

9 tn Alternatively, “gain possession of the land” (cf. NRSV) or “rise up from the land” (cf. NIV). This clause may be understood in two ways: (1) Israel will gain ascendancy over the land or conquer the land (e.g., Exod 1:10; cf. NAB “come up from other lands”) or (2) Israel will be “planted” in the land (Hos 2:22, 23; cf. NLT “will...plant his people”).

10 tn Or “For” (so NASB); NCV “because”; TEV “Yes.”

11 tn Heb “Say to...” The imperative אָמַר (*imru*, Qal imperative masculine plural) functions rhetorically, as an example of erotosis of one verbal form (imperative) for another (indicative). The imperative is used as a rhetorical device to emphasize the certainty of a future action.

12 sn The suffixes on the nouns אָחִיכֶם (*akhekhem*, “your brother”) and אֲחֻתֵיכֶם (*akhotekhem*, “your sister”) are both plural forms. The brother/sister imagery is being applied to Israel and Judah collectively.

13 tn Heb “Plead with your mother, plead!” The imperative רִיבוּ (*rivu*, “plead!”) is repeated twice in this line for emphasis. This rhetorical expression is handled in a woodenly literal sense by most English translations: NASB “Contend...contend”; NAB “Protest...protest!”; NIV “Rebuke...rebuke”; NRSV “Plead...plead”; CEV “Accuse! Accuse your mother!”

14 sn The suffix on the noun אִמְּכֶם (*imm^hkhem*, “your mother”) is a plural form (2nd person masculine). The children of Gomer represent the “children” (i.e., people) of Israel; Gomer represents the nation as a whole.

15 tn The particle כִּי (*ki*) introduces a parenthetical explanatory clause (however, cf. NCV “because”).

sn The reason that Hosea (representing the LORD) calls upon his children (representing the children of Israel) to plead with Gomer (representing the nation as a whole), rather than pleading directly with her himself, is because Hosea (the LORD) has turned his back on his unfaithful wife (Israel). He no longer has a relationship with her (“for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband”) because she abandoned him for her lovers.

16 tn The dependent volitive sequence of imperative followed by *vav* + jussive (וְהָיָה *rivu* followed by וְהָסַר *v^haser*) creates a purpose clause: “so that she might turn away from” (= “put an end to”); cf. NRSV “that she put away”; KJV “let her therefore put away.” Many English translations begin a new sentence here, presumably to improve the English style (so NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT), but this obscures the connection with the preceding clause.

17 tn Heb “put away her adulteries from her face.” The plural noun זְנוּנֶיהָ (*zⁿnuneha*, “adulteries”) is an example of the plural of repeated (or habitual) action: she has had multiple adulterous affairs.

18 tn Heb “[put away] her immoral behavior from between her breasts.” Cf. KJV “her adulteries”; NIV “the unfaithfulness.”

19 tn Heb “and kill her with thirst.” The *vav* prefixed to the verb וְהָמִיתֶיהָ (*vahamut^hiha*) introduces a purpose/result clause: “in order to make her die of thirst” (purpose) or “and thus make her die of thirst” (result).

20 tn Heb “her sons.” English versions have long translated this as “children,” however; cf. KJV, ASV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT.

sn The word order is rhetorical: the accusative אֲחֵי־בָנֶיהָ (*v^het-baneha*, “her sons”) is moved forward for emphasis.

21 tn Heb “sons of adulteries”; KJV “children of whoredoms.”

sn The word order is rhetorical: the construct clause בְּנֵי־זְנוּנִים (*v^hne zⁿnunim*, “sons of adulteries”), which functions as the predicate nominative, is moved forward, before the independent personal pronoun הֵמָּה (*hemma*, “they”) which functions as the subject, to focus on the immoral character of her children.

22 tn Heb “I will go after” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

23 sn This statement alludes to the practice of sexual rites in the Canaanite fertility cult which attempted to secure agricultural fertility from the Canaanite gods (note the following reference to wool, flax, olive oil, and wine).

my wool, my flax, my olive oil, and my wine.¹

The Lord's Discipline Will Bring Israel Back

2:6 Therefore, I will soon² fence her in³ with thorns;
I will wall her in⁴ so that⁵ she cannot find her way.⁶
2:7 Then she will pursue her lovers, but she will not catch⁷ them;
she will seek them, but she will not find them.⁸
Then she will say,
"I will go back⁹ to my husband,¹⁰
because I was better off than that I am now."¹¹

Agricultural Fertility Withdrawn from Israel

2:8 Yet¹² until now¹³ she has refused to acknowledge¹⁴ that I¹⁵ was the one

who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the olive oil;
and that it was I who¹⁶ lavished on her the silver and gold –
which they¹⁷ used in worshiping Baal!¹⁸
2:9 Therefore, I will take back¹⁹ my grain during the harvest time²⁰
and my new wine when it ripens;²¹
I will take away my wool and my flax which I had provided²² in order to clothe her.²³
2:10 Soon²⁴ I will expose her lewd nakedness²⁵ in front of her lovers,
and no one will be able to rescue her from me!²⁶
2:11 I will put an end to all her celebration:
her annual religious festivals,
monthly new moon celebrations,
and weekly Sabbath festivities –
all her appointed festivals.

2:12 I will destroy her vines and fig trees, about which she said, "These are my wages for prostitution²⁷ that my lovers gave to me!"

¹ **tn** Heb "my drinks." Many English versions use the singular "drink" here, but cf. NCV, TEV, CEV "wine."

² **tn** The deictic particle הֲנִי (*hinni*, "Behold!") introduces a future-time reference participle that refers to imminent future action: "I am about to" (TEV "I am going to").

³ **tn** Heb "I will hedge up her way"; NIV "block her path."

⁴ **tn** Heb "I will wall in her wall." The cognate accusative construction בִּנְיָהָ אֶת־בְּרִיחָהּ (*gadarti 'et-g'derah*, "I will wall in her wall") is an emphatic literary device. The 3rd person feminine singular suffix on the noun functions as a dative of disadvantage: "as a wall against her" (A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, 3, remark 2). The expression means "I will build a wall to bar her way." Cf. KJV "I will make a wall"; TEV "I will build a wall"; RSV, NASB, NRSV "I will build a wall against her"; NLT "I will fence her in."

⁵ **tn** The disjunctive clause (object followed by negated verb) introduces a clause which can be understood as either purpose or result.

⁶ **tn** Heb "her paths" (so NAB, NRSV).

⁷ **tn** Heb "overtake" (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV); NLT "be able to catch up with."

⁸ **tn** In the Hebrew text the accusative direct object pronoun אֹתָם (*'otam*, "them") is omitted/elided for balanced poetic parallelism. The LXX supplies αὐτούς (*autous*, "them"); but it is not necessary to emend the MT because this is a poetic literary convention rather than a textual problem.

⁹ **tn** Heb "I will go and return" (so NRSV). The two verbs joined with *vav* form a verbal hendiadys. Normally, the first verb functions adverbially and the second retains its full verbal sense (GKC 386-87 §120.d, h). The Hebrew phrase אֶלְכָה וְאָשׁוּבָה (*elkhaḥ v'ashuvah*, "I will go and I will return") connotes, "I will return again." As cohortatives, both verbs emphasize the resolution of the speaker.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "to my man, the first." Many English translations (e.g., KJV, NAB, NRSV, TEV) take this as "my first husband," although this implies that there was more than one husband involved. The text refers to multiple lovers, but these were not necessarily husbands.

¹¹ **tn** Or "because it was better for me than now" (cf. NCV).

¹² **tn** Or "For" (so KJV, NASB); or "But" (so NCV).

¹³ **tn** The phrase "until now" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "she does not know" (so NASB, NCV); or "she does not acknowledge."

¹⁵ **tn** The 1st person common singular independent personal pronoun אֲנִי (*anokhi*, "I") is emphatic, since the subject of this verbal clause is already explicit in the verb נתַתִּי (*natatti*, Qal perfect 1st person common singular: "I gave").

¹⁶ **tn** The phrase "that it was I who" does not appear in the Hebrew text here, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

¹⁷ **sn** The third person plural here is an obvious reference to the Israelites who had been unfaithful to the LORD in spite of all that he had done for them. To maintain the imagery of Israel as the prostitute, a third person feminine singular would be called for; in the interest of literary consistency this has been supplied in some English translations (e.g., NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "for Baal" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV); cf. TEV "in the worship of Baal."

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "I will return and I will take." The two verbs joined with *vav* conjunction form a verbal hendiadys in which the first verb functions adverbially and the second retains its full verbal sense (GKC 386-87 §120.d, h): אֲשׁוּבָה וְלָקַחְתִּי (*ashuv v'laqakhti*) means "I will take back."

²⁰ **tn** Heb "in its time" (so NAB, NRSV).

²¹ **tn** Heb "in its season" (so NAB, NASB, NRSV).

²² **tn** The words "which I had provided" are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons; cf. NIV "intended to cover."

²³ **tn** Heb "to cover her nakedness" (so KJV and many other English versions); TEV "for clothing."

sn This announcement of judgment is extremely ironic and forcefully communicates poetic justice: The punishment will fit the crime. The Israelites were literally uncovering their nakedness in temple prostitution in the Baal fertility cult rituals. Yahweh will, in effect, give them what they wanted (nakedness) but not in the way they wanted it: Yahweh will withhold the agricultural fertility they sought from Baal which would lead to nakedness caused by impoverishment.

²⁴ **tn** The particle עֲתָה (*'attach*) often refers to the imminent or the impending future: "very soon" (BDB 774 s.v. עֲתָה 1.b). In Hosea it normally introduces imminent judgment (Hos 2:12; 4:16; 5:7; 8:8, 13; 10:2).

²⁵ **tn** Heb "her lewdness" (so KJV, NIV); NAB, NRSV "her shame."

²⁶ **tn** Heb "out of my hand" (so NAB, NASB, NRSV); TEV "save her from my power."

²⁷ **tn** Heb "my wages." The words "for prostitution" are not in the Hebrew text but are supplied for clarity; cf. CEV "gave... as payment for sex."

I will turn her cultivated vines and fig trees⁴ into an uncultivated thicket, so that wild animals² will devour them.

2:13 “I will punish her for the festival days when she burned incense to the Baal idols,³ she adorned herself with earrings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but⁴ she forgot me!”⁵ says the LORD.

Future Repentance and Restoration of Israel

2:14 However, in the future I will allure her,⁶

I will lead⁷ her back into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her.

2:15 From there I will give back her vineyards to her, and turn the “Valley of Trouble”⁸ into an “Opportunity⁹ for Hope.”

There she will sing as she did when she was young,¹⁰ when¹¹ she came up from the land of Egypt.

2:16 “At that time,”¹² declares the LORD, “you will call,¹³ ‘My husband’,¹⁴

you will never again call me,¹⁵ ‘My master.’¹⁶

2:17 For¹⁷ I will remove the names of the Baal idols¹⁸ from your lips,¹⁹ so that you will never again utter their names!”²⁰

New Covenant Relationship with Repentant Israel

2:18 “At that time²¹ I will make a covenant for them with the wild animals, the birds of the air, and the creatures that crawl on the ground.

I will abolish²² the warrior’s bow and sword – that is, every weapon of warfare²³ – from the land,

¹ **tn** Heb “I will turn them”; the referents (vines and fig trees) have been specified in the translation for clarity.

² **tn** Heb “the beasts of the field” (so KJV, NASB); the same expression also occurs in v. 18).

³ **tn** Heb “the days of the Baals, to whom she burned incense.” The word “festival” is supplied to clarify the referent of “days,” and the word “idols” is supplied in light of the plural “Baals” (cf. NLT “her images of Baal”).

⁴ **tn** The *vav* prefixed to a nonverb (וָאֵתִי, *vav* + *oti*) introduces a disjunctive contrastive clause, which is rhetorically powerful.

⁵ **tn** The accusative direct object pronoun וָאֵתִי (וָאֵתִי, “me”) is emphatic in the word order of this clause (cf. NIV “but me she forgot”), emphasizing the heinous inappropriateness of Israel’s departure from the LORD.

⁶ **tn** The participle בָּתְּהָה (*batteha*, Piel participle masculine singular + 3rd feminine singular suffix from *patah*, “to allure”) following the deictic particle הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, “Now!”) describes an event that will occur in the immediate or near future.

⁷ **tn** Following the future-time referent participle (בָּתְּהָה, *batteha*) there is a string of perfects introduced by *vav* consecutive that refer to future events.

⁸ **tn** Heb “Valley of Achor,” so named because of the unfortunate incident recorded in Josh 7:1-26 (the name is explained in v. 26; the Hebrew term Achor means “disaster” or “trouble”). Cf. TEV, CEV “Trouble Valley.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “door” or “doorway”; cf. NLT “gateway.” Unlike the days of Joshua, when Achan’s sin jeopardized Israel’s mission and cast a dark shadow over the nation, Israel’s future return to the land will be marked by renewed hope.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “as in the days of her youth” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

¹¹ **tn** Heb “as in the day when” (so KJV, NASB).

¹² **tn** Heb “And in that day”; NLT “In that coming day.”

¹³ **tc** The MT reads תִּקְרָאֵי לִי (*tiqurei li*, “you will call”; Qal imperfect 2nd person feminine singular). The versions (LXX, Syriac, Vulgate) all reflect an alternate *Vorlage* of לִי תִקְרָאֵי (*tiqua li*, “she will call me”; Qal imperfect 3rd person feminine singular followed by preposition ל, *lamed*, + 1st person common singular pronominal suffix). This textual variant undoubtedly arose under the influence of לִי תִקְרָאֵי (*tiqurei li*) which follows. Most English versions follow the reading of the MT (KJV, ASV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT, CEV), but some follow the ancient versions and read the 3rd person (“she”, so NAB, NCV, TEV).

¹⁴ **tn** There are wordplays on the terms אִישׁ (*ish*) and בָּעַל

(*ba'al*) here. The term אִישׁ (*ish*, “my man, husband”) is a title of affection (Gen 2:23; 3:6, 16) as the counterpart to אִשָּׁה (*ishah*, “woman, wife”). The term בָּעַל (*ba'li*, “my lord”) emphasizes the husband’s legal position (Exod 21:3; Deut 22:22; 24:4). The relationship will no longer be conditioned on the outward legal commitment but on a new inward bond of mutual affection and love.

¹⁵ **tc** The MT reads לִי תִקְרָאֵי לִי (*tiqurei li*, “you will call me”; Qal imperfect 2nd person feminine singular followed by preposition ל, *lamed*, + 1st person common singular pronominal suffix). The versions (LXX, Syriac, Vulgate) all reflect an alternate *Vorlage* of לִי תִקְרָאֵי לִי (*tiqurei li*, “she will call me”; Qal imperfect 3rd person feminine singular followed by preposition ל + 1st person common singular pronominal suffix). This textual variant is related to the preceding textual issue (see preceding **tc** note).

¹⁶ **sn** There is a wordplay on the terms בָּעַל (*ba'li*, “my master”) and הַבְּעָלִים (*habbe'alim*, “the Baals”) which are derived from the root בָּעַל (*ba'al*, “master; lord”). This wordplay is especially effective because the term בָּעַל can refer to one’s husband and is also the name of the Canaanite storm god Baal. Referring to a spouse the term normally means “husband; master.” It was a common, ordinary, nonpejorative term that was frequently used in an interchangeable manner with אִישׁ (*ish*, “husband; man”). Due to its similarity in sound to the abhorrent Canaanite fertility god Baal, the repentant Israelites would be so spiritually sensitive that they would refrain from even uttering this neutral term for fear of recalling their former idolatry. The purpose of the exile is to end Israel’s worship of Baal and to remove syncretism.

¹⁷ **tn** The *vav* consecutive prefixed to וְהִסֵּרְתִּי (*vahasiroiti*) “I will remove” (*vav* consecutive + Hiphil perfect 1st person common singular) introduces an explanatory clause.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “the Baals.” The singular term בָּעַל (*ba'al*) refers to the Canaanite god Baal himself, while the plural form הַבְּעָלִים (*habbe'alim*) refers to the manifestations of the god (i.e., idols; BDB 127 s.v. בָּעַל II.1).

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “from her mouth.” In the translation this is rendered as second person for consistency.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “they will no longer be mentioned by their name.”

²¹ **tn** Heb “And in that day” (so KJV, ASV).

²² **tn** Heb “I will break”; NAB “I will destroy”; NCV “I will smash”; NLT “I will remove.”

²³ **tn** Heb “bow and sword and warfare.” The first two terms in the triad יָרֵךְ וְחֶרֶב וְקִרְבָּנִים (*yarek v'kherev umilkhamah*, literally, “bow and sword and warfare”) are examples of synecdoche of specific (bow and sword) for general (weapons of war, so CEV). However, they might be examples of metonymy (bow and sword) of association (warfare).

and I will allow them to live securely.¹¹
2:19 I will commit myself to you² forever;
 I will commit myself to you in³ right-
 eousness and justice,
 in steadfast love and tender compassion.
2:20 I will commit myself to you in faith-
 fulness;
 then⁴ you will acknowledge⁵ the
 LORD.¹⁶

Agricultural Fertility Restored to the Repentant Nation

2:21 “At that time,⁷ I will willingly re-
 spond,⁸ declares the LORD.
 “I will respond to the sky,
 and the sky⁹ will respond to the ground;
2:22 then the ground will respond to the
 grain, the new wine, and the olive oil;
 and they will respond to ‘God Plants’
 (Jezreel)!¹⁰

2:23 Then I will plant her as my own¹¹ in
 the land.
 I will have pity on ‘No Pity’ (Lo-
 Ruhamah).
 I will say to ‘Not My People’ (Lo-
 Ammi), ‘You are my people!’
 And he¹² will say, ‘You are¹³ my God!’”

An Illustration of God’s Love for Idolatrous Israel

3:1 The LORD said to me, “Go, show love
 to¹⁴ your wife¹⁵ again, even though she loves¹⁶
 another man¹⁷ and continually commits adul-
 tery.¹⁸ Likewise, the LORD loves¹⁹ the Israel-
 ites²⁰ although they turn to other gods and love

¹ **tn** Heb “and I will cause them to lie down in safety.” The causative nuance (“will make them”) is retained in several English versions (e.g., KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV).

² **tn** Heb “I will betroth you to me” (so NIV) here and in the following lines. Cf. NRSV “I will take you for my wife forever.”

³ **tn** The preposition בְּ (*bet*), which is repeated throughout 2:19-20 [21-22], denotes price paid (BDB 90 s.v. בְּ III.3; e.g., Ezek 3:14). The text contains an allusion to the payment of bridal gifts. The LORD will impute the moral character to Israel that will be necessary for a successful covenant relationship (*contra* 4:1).

⁴ **tn** The vav consecutive on the suffix conjugation verb יִדְעֶתָ (*yada’at*, “then you will know”) introduces a result clause (cf. NASB, CEV).

⁵ **tn** Or “know.” The term יָדַע (*yada’*, “know, acknowledge”) is often used in covenant contexts. It can refer to the suzerain’s acknowledgment of his covenant obligations to his vassal or to the vassal’s acknowledgment of his covenant obligations to his suzerain. When used in reference to a vassal, the verb “know” is metonymical (cause for effect) for “obey.” See H. Huffmann, “The Treaty Background of Hebrew *yada’*,” *BASOR* 181 (1966): 31-37.

⁶ **tc** The MT reads יהוה (*yhwh*, “the LORD”); however, many Hebrew mss read כִּי אֲנִי (*ki’ani*, “that it is I”), as also reflected in the Latin Vulgate (cf. CEV “know who I am”).

⁷ **tn** Heb “And in that day”; NAB, NRSV “On that day.”

⁸ **tn** The verb עָנָה (*anah*) which is used throughout 2:23-24, is related to the root אָנַח (*anah*), “to answer, listen attentively, react willingly” (BDB 772 s.v. 1.b; HALOT 852 s.v. עָנָה 3.b).

⁹ **tn** Heb “and they.” In the Hebrew text the plural pronoun is used because it refers back to the term translated “sky,” which is a dual form in Hebrew. Many English versions (e.g., NAB, NASB, NRSV) use the plural term “heavens” here, which agrees with a plural pronoun (cf. also NIV, NCV “skies”).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Jezreel.” The use of the name יִזְרְעֵל (*yizra’el*, “Jezreel”) creates a powerful three-fold wordplay: (1) The proper name יִזְרְעֵל (“Jezreel”) is a phonetic wordplay on the similar sounding name יִשְׂרָאֵל (*yisra’el*, “Israel”): God will answer Israel, that is, Jezreel. (2) The name יִזְרְעֵל (“Jezreel”) plays on the verb זָרַע (*zara’*, “to sow, plant”), the immediately following word: זָרַעְתִּיהָ (*uzra’tiha*, vav + Qal perfect 1st person common singular + 3rd person feminine singular suffix: “I will sow/plant her”). This wordplay creates a popular etymology for the agricultural fertility imagery in 2:21-23 [2:23-25]. (3) This positive connotation of יִזְרְעֵל (“Jezreel”) in 2:21-23 [2:23-25] reverses the negative connotation of יִזְרְעֵל (“Jezreel”) in 1:4-5 (bloodshed of Jehu in the Jezreel Valley).

¹¹ **tn** Heb “for myself.”

¹² **tn** The Hebrew text, carrying out the reference to the son born in 1:8-9, uses the third person masculine singular pronoun here; some English translations use third person plural (“they,” so KJV, NASB, NIV, CEV) in keeping with the immediate context, which refers to reestablished Israel.

¹³ **tn** The words “You are” do not appear in the Hebrew text, but are implied. It is necessary to supply the phrase in the translation to prevent the reader from understanding the predicate “my God” as an exclamation (cf. NAB).

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Go again! Love!” Cf. NAB “Give your love to.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “a woman.” The probable referent is Gomer. Some English translations (e.g., NIV, NLT) specify the referent as “your wife.”

¹⁶ **tc** The MT vocalizes אֲהַבָה (*ahuvat*) as a construct form of the Qal passive participle and takes רַע (*rea*) as a genitive of agent: “who is loved by רַע.” However, the ancient versions (LXX, Syriac, Vulgate) all vocalize אֲהַבָה as an absolute form of the Qal active participle, and take רַע as the accusative direct object: “who loves רַע.” The English translations consistently follow the MT. The editors of *BHS* suggest the revocalization but with some reservation. For discussion of the vocalization, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:230.

tn Heb “a woman who is loved by a companion” אִשָּׁה אֲהַבָה (*ishah ahuvat rea*). The substantival participle אֲהַבָה (“one who is loved”) is in apposition to אִשָּׁה (“a woman”). The genitive noun רַע (“companion”) functions as the agent of the preceding construct noun: “who is loved by a companion” (רַע אֲהַבָה). Cf. NAB “a woman beloved of a paramour”; NRSV “a woman who has a lover.”

¹⁷ **tn** The meaning of the noun רַע (*rea*) is debated because it has a broad range of meanings: (1) “friend,” (2) “lover,” (3) “companion,” (4) “neighbor,” and (5) “another” (HALOT 1253-55 s.v. II רַע; BDB 945-46 s.v. II רַע). The Hebrew lexicons favor the nuance “lover; paramour” here (HALOT 1255 s.v. 2; BDB 946 s.v. 1). Most scholars adopt the same approach; however, a few suggest that רַע does not refer to another man, but to her husband (Hosea). Both approaches are reflected in English translations: NASB “a woman who is loved by her husband”; NIV “though she is loved by another”; NAB “a woman beloved of a paramour”; KJV “a woman beloved of her friend”; NJPS “a woman who, while befriended by a companion”; TEV “a woman who is committing adultery with a lover”; CEV “an unfaithful woman who has a lover.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “love a woman who is loved of a lover and is an adulteress.”

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “like the love of the LORD.” The genitive after the construct functions as a subjective genitive.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “sons of Israel” (so NASB); KJV “children of Israel”; NAB “people of Israel.”

to offer raisin cakes to idols.”¹ **3:2** So I paid fifteen shekels of silver and about seven bushels of barley² to purchase her. **3:3** Then I told her, “You must live with me many days; you must not commit adultery or have sexual intercourse with³ another man, and I also will wait for you.” **3:4** For the Israelites⁴ must live many days without a king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred fertility pillar, without ephod or idols. **3:5** Afterward, the Israelites will turn and seek the LORD their God and their Davidic king.⁵ Then they will submit to the LORD in fear and receive his blessings⁶ in the future.⁷

The Lord's Covenant Lawsuit against the Nation Israel

4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites!⁸
For the LORD has a covenant lawsuit⁹
against the people of Israel.¹⁰
For there is neither faithfulness nor loyalty
in the land,
nor do they acknowledge God.¹¹

4:2 There is only cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery.
They resort to violence and bloodshed.¹²
4:3 Therefore the land will mourn,
and all its inhabitants will perish.¹³
The wild animals,¹⁴ the birds of the sky,
and even the fish in the sea will perish.

The Lord's Dispute against the Sinful Priesthood

4:4 Do not let anyone accuse or contend
against anyone else.¹⁵
for my case is against you priests!¹⁶
4:5 You stumble day and night,
and the false prophets stumble with you;
You have destroyed your own people!¹⁷

¹ **tn** Heb “they are lovers of cakes of raisins.” A number of English translations render this literally (e.g., ASV, NAB, NASB, NRSV).

² **tc** The LXX reads “a homer of barley and a measure of wine,” a reading followed by some English translations (e.g., NRSV, NLT).

tn Heb “a homer of barley and a lethec of barley.” A homer was about 5 bushels (180 liters) and a lethec about 2.5 bushels (90 liters).

³ **tn** Heb “and you will not be for”; NIV “be intimate with.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “sons of Israel” (so NASB); KJV “children of Israel”; NAB “people of Israel” (likewise in the following verse).

⁵ **tn** Heb “David their king”; cf. NCV “the king from David’s family”; TEV “a descendant of David their king”; NLT “David’s descendant, their king.”

sn It is not clear whether Hosea was predicting a restoration of Davidic kingship over Israel and Judah (e.g., Jer 17:25; 22:2) or referring to the ultimate Davidic king, namely, the Messiah, who will fulfill the conditions of the Davidic covenant and inaugurate/fulfill the blessings of the Davidic covenant for Israel. The Messiah is frequently pictured as the “New David” because he would fulfill the ideals of the Davidic covenant and be everything that David and his descendants were commissioned to be (e.g., Isa 9:7[6]; 16:5; Jer 23:5-6; 30:9; 33:15-16; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25).

⁶ **tn** Heb “his goodness”; NLT “his good gifts.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “in the end of the days.” Cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NCV, NLT “in the last days.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “sons of Israel” (so NASB); KJV “children of Israel”; NAB, NRSV “people of Israel.”

⁹ **tn** The noun רִיב (*riv*, “dispute, lawsuit”) is used in two contexts: (1) nonlegal contexts: (a) “dispute” between individuals (e.g., Gen 13:7; Isa 58:1; Jer 15:10) or (b) “brawl; quarrel” between people (e.g., Exod 17:7; Deut 25:1); and (2) legal contexts: (a) “lawsuit; legal process” (e.g., Exod 23:3-6; Deut 19:17; 21:5; Ezek 44:24; Ps 35:23); (b) “lawsuit; legal case” (e.g., Deut 1:12; 17:8; Prov 18:17; 25:9), and (c) God’s “lawsuit” on behalf of a person or against his own people (Hos 4:1; 12:3; Mic 6:2; HALOT 1225-26 s.v. רִיב). The term in Hosea refers to a covenant lawsuit in which Yahweh the suzerain lodges a legal case against his disobedient vassal, accusing Israel and Judah of breach of covenant which will elicit the covenant curses.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “with the inhabitants of the land” (so KJV); NAB, NASB, NRSV “against the inhabitants of the land.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “there is no truthfulness nor loyalty nor knowledge of God in the land.” Here “knowledge of God” refers to recognition of his authority and obedience to his will.

¹² **tn** Heb “they break out and bloodshed touches bloodshed.” The Hebrew term פָּרַץ (*parats*, “to break out”) refers to violent and wicked actions (BDB 829 s.v. פָּרַץ 7; HALOT 972 s.v. פָּרַץ 6.c). It is used elsewhere in a concrete sense to describe breaking through physical barriers. Here it is used figuratively to describe breaking moral barriers and restraints (cf. TEV “Crimes increase, and there is one murder after another”).

¹³ **tn** Or “languish” (so KJV, NRSV); NIV “waste away.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “the beasts of the field” (so NAB, NIV).

¹⁵ **tn** Or “Let no one contend or accuse.”

¹⁶ **tc** The MT reads וְעִנְיֹן כְּרִיבֵי בֵהוֹן (v: *amm^hkha kimrive khoen*): “And your people [are] like those who contend against the priest.” This is reflected in the LXX and the versions; however, it is syntactically awkward and makes little sense in context. Several textual critics suggest emending the text to read וְעִנְיֹן רִיבֵי בֵהוֹן (v: *imm^hkha rivi khoen*): “My contention is with/against you, O priest!” This involves (1) the vocalization of וְעִנְיֹן (“your people”) as עִנְיֹן (“with/against you”) and (2) positing dittography (a letter written twice instead of once) of כ (kaf) between original רִיבֵי בֵהוֹן to create וְעִנְיֹן כְּרִיבֵי בֵהוֹן (MT). The BHS editors suggest that the MT is corrupt and should be emended. However, the editors of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project retain the MT reading with a “B” rating. Likewise, the English translations are split: (1) KJV “for thy people are as they that strive with the priest”; NASB “for your people are like those who contend with the priest”; NIV “for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest”; (2) RSV “for with you is my contention, O priest!”; NJPS “for this your people has a grievance against [you], O priest!”; TEV “my complaint is against you priests”; CEV “My case is against you, the priests!”

tn The singular noun כֹּהֵן (*cohen*, “priest”) may be understood as a singular of number (so KJV, NASB, NRSV), referring to a singular individual (perhaps the high priest); however, it is more likely that it functions as a collective singular, referring to the priesthood as a whole (e.g., 4:7-10, so NAB, NCV, TEV, NLT, CEV). Collective singular forms alternate with plural forms throughout the oracle against the priests in 4:4-10.

¹⁷ **tc** The MT reads וְהָרַגְתִּי אִמְךָ וְהָרַגְתִּי אִמְךָ (v: *damiti^h immekha*, “and I will destroy your mother”), and is followed by most English versions; however, the text should probably be emended to וְהָרַגְתִּי אִמְךָ וְהָרַגְתִּי אִמְךָ (v: *damit^h ammekha*, “and you have destroyed your own people”). The 2nd person masculine singular form הָרַגְתִּי (v: *damit^h*, “and you have destroyed”) is preserved in several medieval Hebrew MSS and reflected in Jerome’s Vulgate. For discussion in favor of the MT reading, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:232.

tn Or “and I will destroy your mother” (so NASB, NRSV).

4:6 You have destroyed¹ my people by failing to acknowledge me! Because you refuse to acknowledge me,² I will reject you as my priests. Because you reject³ the law of your God, I will reject⁴ your descendants.
4:7 The more the priests increased in numbers, the more they rebelled against me. They have turned⁵ their glorious calling into a shameful disgrace!
4:8 They feed on the sin offerings of my people; their appetites long for their iniquity!
4:9 I will deal with the people and priests together.⁶ I will punish them both for their ways, and I will repay them for their deeds.
4:10 They will eat, but not be satisfied; they will engage in prostitution, but not increase in numbers; because they have abandoned the LORD by pursuing other gods.⁷

Judgment of Pagan Idolatry and Cultic Prostitution

4:11 Old and new wine take away the understanding of my people.⁸
4:12 They consult their wooden idols, and their diviner's staff answers with an oracle. The wind of prostitution blows them astray;

they commit spiritual adultery⁹ against their God.
4:13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops, and burn offerings on the hills; they sacrifice¹⁰ under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is so pleasant. As a result, your daughters have become cult prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery!
4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery. For the men consort with harlots, they sacrifice with temple prostitutes. It is true:¹¹ "A people that lacks understanding will come to ruin!"

Warning to Judah: Do Not Join in Israel's Apostasy!

4:15 Although you, O Israel, commit adultery, do not let Judah become guilty! Do not journey to Gilgal! Do not go up to Beth Aven!¹² Do not swear, "As surely as the LORD lives!"
4:16 Israel has rebelled¹³ like a stubborn heifer! Soon¹⁴ the LORD will put them out to pasture like a lamb in a broad field!¹⁵

¹ **tn** *Heb* "they have destroyed" or "my people are destroyed" (so KJV, NIV, NRSV).

² **tn** *Heb* "Because you reject knowledge"; NLT "because they don't know me."

³ **tn** *Heb* "have forgotten"; NAB, NIV "have ignored."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "forget" (so KJV, NRSV); NLT "forget to bless."

⁵ **tc** The MT reads *אָמַיר* (*'amir*, "I will change, exchange"; Hiphil imperfect 1st person common singular from *אָמַר*, *mur*, "to change, exchange"). However, an alternate scribal tradition (*tiqaneh sopherim*, that is, an intentional scribal change when the Masoretes believed that the received consonantal reading was corrupt) preserves the reading *הִמְיִרוּ* (*hemiru*, "they have exchanged"; Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural from *אָמַר*). This alternate scribal tradition is also found in the Targum and reflected in the Syriac Peshitta. Several translations follow the MT: KJV, RSV, NASB "I will change their glory into shame" and TEV "I will turn your honor into disgrace"; however, others adopt the alternate tradition: NRSV "they changed their glory into shame" and NIV "they exchanged their glory for something disgraceful." For discussion in favor of the MT reading, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:232.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "And it shall be, like people, like priest" (so ASV); NAB "The priests shall fare no better than the people."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "by guarding harlotry." The present translation assumes that the first word of v. 11 in the Hebrew text is to be taken with the infinitive at the end of v. 10 (so also NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "take away the heart of my people." The present translation assumes that the first word of v. 12 in the Hebrew text is to be construed with the noun at the end of v. 11 (so also TEV, CEV, NLT).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "adultery." The adjective "spiritual" is supplied in the translation to clarify that apostasy is meant here.

¹⁰ **tn** The phrase "they sacrifice" is not repeated in the Hebrew text here but is implied by parallelism; it is provided in the translation for the sake of clarity.

¹¹ **tn** The words "it is true" are supplied in the translation to indicate that this is a conclusion drawn on the preceding behavior. Cf. NAB "So must a people"; NRSV "thus a people"; TEV "As the proverb says, 'A people.'"

¹² **sn** *Beth Aven* means "house of wickedness" in Hebrew; it is a polemic reference to "Bethel," which means "house of God." Cf. CEV "at sinful Bethel."

¹³ **tn** The Hebrew verb "has rebelled" (*סָרָה*, *sarah*) can also mean "to be stubborn." This is the same root used in the simile: "like a stubborn (*סָרָה*, *sorerah*) heifer." The similarity between Israel and a stubborn heifer is emphasized by the repetition of the same term.

¹⁴ **tn** The particle *עֵתָהּ* (*'attah*) often refers to the imminent or the impending future: "very soon" (BDB 774 s.v. *עֵתָהּ* 1.b). In Hosea it normally introduces imminent judgment (Hos 2:12; 4:16; 5:7; 8:8, 13; 10:2).

¹⁵ **tn** Or "How can the LORD feed them like a lamb in a meadow?" The syntax of this line is difficult and has been understood in two ways: (1) a declarative statement as an announcement of judgment (BDB 774 s.v. *עֵתָהּ* 1.b): "Now the LORD will feed them like a lamb in the broad field" (cf. KJV, ASV, NCV, NLT) or (2) as a rhetorical question lamenting the uncooperative spirit of Israel: "How can the LORD feed them like a lamb in a meadow?"; cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, TEV), designed to produce a negative answer ("He cannot feed them...!"). However, this statement lacks an explicit interrogative marker. Although Hosea occasionally asks a rhetorical question without an explicit interrogative marker (e.g., 10:9; 13:14a), he normally does use a rhetorical particle to intro-

4:17 Ephraim has attached himself to
idols;
Do not go near him!

The Shameful Sinners Will Be Brought to Shame

4:18 They consume their alcohol,
then engage in cult prostitution;
they dearly love their shameful behavior.
4:19 A whirlwind has wrapped them in its
wings;
they will be brought to shame because of
their idolatrous worship.¹

Announcement of Sin and Judgment

5:1 Hear this, you priests!
Pay attention, you Israelites!²
Listen closely,³ O king!⁴
For judgment is about to overtake you!⁵
For you were like a trap⁶ to Mizpah,⁷
like a net⁸ spread out to catch Tabor.⁹
5:2 Those who revolt are knee-deep in
slaughter,¹⁰

but I will discipline them all.¹¹
5:3 I know Ephraim all too well;¹²
the evil of¹³ Israel is not hidden from me.
For you have engaged in prostitution, O
Ephraim;
Israel has defiled itself.¹⁴
5:4 Their wicked deeds do not allow them
to return to their God;
because a spirit of idolatry¹⁵ controls
their heart,¹⁶
and they do not acknowledge the LORD.
5:5 The arrogance of Israel testifies
against it;
Israel and Ephraim will be overthrown¹⁷
because¹⁸ of their iniquity.
Even Judah will be brought down¹⁹ with
them.

*The Futility of Sacrificial Ritual without Moral
Obedience*

5:6 Although they bring their flocks and
herds²⁰

duce rhetorical questions (e.g., 6:4; 8:5; 9:5, 14; 11:8; 13:9-10, 14b). Elsewhere, Hosea uses the introductory temporal adverb עֵתָּה ("soon") to introduce announcements of imminent future judgment (2:12; 4:16; 5:7; 8:8, 13; 10:2) and accusations of sin (5:3; 13:2). Although Israel has been as rebellious as a stubborn heifer, the LORD will indeed gain control of Israel: they will be like lambs (weakened and defeated) when he puts them out to pasture in a broad field (exile).

¹ **tn** Heb "their altars" (so NAB, NRSV) or "their sacrifices" (so KJV, NASB, NIV). Here בְּזִבְחוֹתָם (*zivkhotam*, "altars; sacrifices") is a metonymy of association for Israel's apostate idolatrous Baal worship.

² **tn** Heb "O house of Israel" (so NAB, NASB, NRSV); NLT "all of Israel's leaders."

³ **tn** Heb "Use the ear"; ASV "give ear."

⁴ **tn** Heb "O house of the king" (so KJV); NIV "O royal house."

⁵ **tn** Heb "for the judgment is to you"; or "For this accusation is against you." Cf. NIV "This judgment is against you."

⁶ **sn** The noun פֶּחַ (pakh, "trap") is used (1) literally of a bird-trap, used in similes and metaphors (Amos 3:5; Prov 7:23; Eccl 9:12), and (2) figuratively to refer to (a) calamities and plots (Job 18:9; 22:10; Pss 91:3; 119:110; 124:7; 140:6; 141:9; 142:4; Prov 22:5; Isa 24:17-18; Jer 18:22; 48:43-44; Hos 9:8) and (b) a source of calamity (Josh 23:13; Pss 11:6; 69:23; Isa 8:14; Hos 5:1; BDB 809 s.v. פֶּחַ).

⁷ **tn** Heb "you were a trap to Mizpah."

⁸ **sn** The noun רֶשֶׁת (*reshet*, "net") is used (1) literally of a net used to catch birds (Prov 1:17) and (2) in figurative descriptions of the wicked plotting to ensnare their victims (Prov 29:5; Pss 9:16; 10:9; 25:15; 31:5; 35:7; 57:7; 140:6; Job 18:8; BDB 440 s.v. רֶשֶׁת).

⁹ **tn** Heb "and a net spread out over Tabor."

¹⁰ **tc** The MT reads וְשֹׂמְרֵי הַנְּמִיּוֹת שִׁנְּתוּהָ (*v'shakhatah setim he'miqu*): "and rebels have made deep the slaughter." The BHS editors propose וְשֹׂמְרֵי הַנְּמִיּוֹת וְשִׁנְּתוּהָ (*v'shakhatah hashittim he'miqu*): "they have made the pit of Shittim [place of idolatry] deep" (cf. NRSV, TEV, NLT; see BDB 1006 s.v. שִׁנְּתוּהָ). This involves: (1) phonological confusion between the similar sounding consonants ת (*tav*) and נ (*tet*), (2) redivision of words to take ה (*hey*) as the article with הַנְּמִיּוֹת rather than feminine noun ending of וְשִׁנְּתוּהָ, and (3) revocalization of הַנְּמִיּוֹת with the two *daghesh fortes*. Retaining the reading of the MT is preferable here.

tn Heb "and those who revolt have gone deep into slaughter" (similar KJV, NIV); NASB "deep in depravity."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "but I am discipline to all of them"; ASV "but I am a rebuker of them all."

¹² **tn** The phrase "all too well" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for clarity and stylistic reasons.

¹³ **tn** The phrase "the evil of" does not appear in the Hebrew text here, but is implied by the metonymical (cause-effect) use of the term "Israel." It is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity. Cf. NCV "what they have done is not hidden from me."

¹⁴ **tn** Or "Israel has become corrupt"; NCV "has made itself unclean"; TEV "are unfit to worship me."

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "a spirit of harlotries"; NIV "a spirit of prostitution"; TEV "Idolatry has a powerful hold on them." However, CEV takes this literally: "your constant craving for sex keeps you from knowing me."

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "is in their heart" (so NIV); NASB, NRSV "is within them."

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "will stumble" (so NCV, NLT). The verb כָּשַׁל (*kashal*, "to stumble; to stagger; to totter") is used figuratively to describe distress (Isa 59:10; Ps 107:12), the debilitating effects of misfortune and calamity (Isa 5:27), and toil in exile (Lam 5:13). It is often used figuratively to describe the overthrow of a people or nation through divine judgment (Isa 8:15; Jer 6:21; 50:32; Hos 4:5; 5:5; 14:2). The Niphal stem used here is also frequently used in reference to divine judgment: "be overthrown," of nations, armies (Jer 6:15; 8:12; Dan 11:19, 33, 34, 41; BDB 505 s.v. כָּשַׁל 1.b). This figurative use of כָּשַׁל is often used in collocation with נָפַל (*nafal*, "to fall"; Isa 3:8; 31:3; 8:15; Jer 6:15; Dan 11:19).

¹⁸ **tn** Or "in" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "will stumble" (so NCV). The term כָּשַׁל (*kashal*) appeared in the preceding line (Niphal "be overthrown") and now appears here (Qal "will stumble"). The repetition of כָּשַׁל emphasizes that a similar fate will befall Judah because it failed to learn its lesson from God's judgment on Israel. The verb כָּשַׁל ("to stumble") does not describe the moral stumbling of Judah, but the effect of God's judgment (Isa 8:15; Jer 6:21; 50:32; Hos 4:5; 5:5; 14:2), and the toil of exile (Lam 5:13).

²⁰ **sn** The terms *flocks* and *herds* are used figuratively for animal sacrifices (metonymy of association). Hosea describes the futility of seeking God's favor with mere ritual sacrifice without the prerequisite moral obedience (e.g., 1 Sam 15:24; Ps 50:6-8; 51:17-18; Isa 1:12; Mic 6:6-8).

to seek¹ the favor of the LORD,²
They will not find him –
he has withdrawn himself from them!
5:7 They have committed treason³
against the LORD,
because they bore illegitimate children.
Soon⁴ the new moon festival will devour
them and their fields.

The Prophet's Declaration of Judgment

5:8 Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah!
Sound the trumpet in Ramah!
Sound the alarm in Beth Aven!⁵
Tremble in fear,⁶ O Benjamin!
5:9 Ephraim will be ruined in the day of
judgment!⁷
What I am declaring⁸ to the tribes of Is-
rael will certainly take place!⁹

*The Oppressors of the Helpless Will Be
Oppressed*

5:10 The princes of Judah are like those
who move boundary markers.
I will pour out my rage on them like a
torrential flood!¹⁰

5:11 Ephraim will be oppressed,¹¹
crushed¹² under judgment,¹³
because he was determined to pursue
worthless idols.¹⁴

The Curse of the Incurable Wound

5:12 I will be like a moth to Ephraim,
like wood rot¹⁵ to the house of Judah.

5:13 When Ephraim saw¹⁶ his sickness
and Judah saw his wound,
then Ephraim turned¹⁷ to Assyria,
and begged¹⁸ its great king¹⁹ for help.
But he will not be able to heal you!
He cannot cure your wound!²⁰

¹ **tn** Heb “they go out to seek the LORD”; NCV “to worship the Lord”; NLT “to offer sacrifices to the Lord.”

² **tn** Heb “the LORD”; the phrase “the favor of” does not appear in Hebrew here, but is supplied for the sake of clarity. It is implied by the metonymical (cause-effect) reference to the LORD, the source of favor and forgiveness.

³ **tn** Heb “dealt treacherously against” (so KJV, NASB); NRSV “dealt faithlessly”; NLT “betrayed the honor of.”

⁴ **tn** The particle *עֵתָה* (*attah*) often refers to the imminent or the impending future: “very soon” (BDB 774 s.v. *עֵתָה* 1.b). In Hosea it normally introduces imminent judgment (Hos 2:12; 4:16; 5:7; 8:8, 13; 10:2).

⁵ **sn** See the note on the place name *Beth Aven* in 4:15.

⁶ **tc** The MT reads the anomalous *בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶתְרֵרָה בְּנֵי־בִנְיָמִין* (*‘akharekha binyamin*, “behind you, O Benjamin”), a reading followed by many English versions. The LXX reads *ἐξεστᾶ* (*exestā*) which might reflect an alternate textual tradition of *הִתְרַדוּ בְּנֵי־בִנְיָמִין* (*hakharidu binyamin*, “Tremble in fear, O Benjamin”); the verb form would be a Hiphil imperative 2nd person masculine plural from the root *חרד* (*kharad*, “to tremble, be terrified”; BDB 353 s.v. *חרד*). For discussion of this textual problem, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:236.

⁷ **tn** Heb “day of rebuke” (so KJV, NASB); NCV, NRSV, TEV, NLT “day of punishment.”

⁸ **tn** The verb *הודיעתי* (*hoda'iti*, Hiphil perfect 1st person common singular from *יָדַע*, *yada'*; Qal “to know,” Hiphil “to make known, declare”) here functions as (1) an instantaneous perfect, representing an action being performed at the same instant that the speaker utters the statement (e.g., Gen 14:22; Deut 8:19; 26:3; 2 Sam 17:11; 19:30; Ps 143:6); or (2) an epistolary perfect, representing a situation in past time from the viewpoint of the recipient of the message but in present time from the viewpoint of the writer (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:19; 2 Chr 2:12). For functions of the perfect tense (suffix-conjugation), see *IBHS* 486-90 §30.5.1.

⁹ **tn** The substantival use of the Niphal participle *נֶאֱמָנָה* (*ne'emanah*, “that which is sure”) refers to an event that will occur in the future (BDB 52 s.v. *אָמַן* 2).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “like water” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV); NLT “like a waterfall.” The term *מַיִם* (*mayim*, “water”) often refers to literal flood waters (Gen 7:7, 10; 8:3, 7-9; Isa 54:9) and figuratively describes the LORD’s judgment that totally destroys the wicked (BDB 566 s.v. *מַי* 4.k).

¹¹ **tn** The verb *עָשָׂק* (*ashaq*, “to oppress”) may refer to (1) oppressing the poor and defenseless (BDB 798 s.v. *עָשָׂק* 1), or more likely to (2) oppression of one nation by another as the judgment of God (Deut 28:29, 33; 1 Chr 16:21; Pss 105:14; 119:121, 122; Isa 52:4; Jer 50:33; Hos 5:11; BDB 798 s.v. 2). The Qal passive participles *עָשֻׂק* (*ashuq*, “oppressed”) and *רָעִיץ* (*r'itsuts*, “crushed”) might refer to a present situation (so KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NRSV); however, the context suggests that they refer to a future situation (so NLT). When a participle is used in reference to the future, it often denotes an imminent future situation and may be rendered, “about to” (e.g., Gen 6:17; 15:14; 20:3; 37:30; 41:25; 49:29; Exod 9:17-18; Deut 28:31; 1 Sam 3:11; 1 Kgs 2:2; 20:22; 2 Kgs 7:2). For functions of the participle, see *IBHS* 627-28 §37.6f.

¹² **sn** The term *רָעִיץ* (*r'itsuts*, “crushed”) is a metaphor for weakness (e.g., 2 Kgs 18:21; Isa 36:6; 42:3) and oppression (e.g., Deut 28:33; 1 Sam 12:3, 4; Amos 4:1; Isa 58:6). Here it is used as a figure to describe the devastating effects of the LORD’s judgment.

¹³ **tn** Heb “crushed of judgment” (*רָעִיץ בְּמִשְׁפַּט*, *r'itsuts mishpat*). The second term is a genitive of cause (“crushed because of judgment” or “crushed under judgment”) rather than respect (“crushed in judgment,” as in many English versions).

¹⁴ **tn** The meaning of the Hebrew term translated “worthless idols” is uncertain; cf. KJV “the commandment”; NASB “man’s command”; NAB “filth”; NRSV “vanity.”

¹⁵ **tn** The noun *רָקָב* (*raqav*, “rottenness, decay”) refers to wood rot caused by the ravages of worms (BDB 955 s.v. *רָקָב*); cf. NLT “dry rot.” The related noun *רִיקָוֹן* (*riqqavon*) refers to “rotten wood” (Job 41:27).

¹⁶ **tn** Hosea employs three preterites (*vayyiqtol* forms) in verse 13a-b to describe a past-time situation.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “went to” (so NAB, NRSV, TEV); CEV “asked help from.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “sent to” (so KJV, NIV, NRSV).

¹⁹ **tc** The MT reads *מֶלֶךְ יָרֵב* (*melek yarev*, “a contentious king”). This is translated as a proper name (“king Jareb”) by KJV, ASV, NASB. However, the stative adjective *יָרֵב* (“contentious”) is somewhat awkward. The words should be redivided as an archaic genitive-construct *מַלְכֵי רָב* (*malkei rav*, “great king”; cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT) which preserves the old genitive *hireq yod* ending. This is the equivalent of the Assyrian royal epithet *sarru rabbu* (“the great king”). See also the **tc** note on the same phrase in 10:6.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “your wound will not depart from you.”

sn Hosea personifies Ephraim’s “wound” as if it could depart from the sickly Ephraim (see the formal equivalent rendering in the preceding **tn**). Ephraim’s sinful action in relying upon an Assyrian treaty for protection will not dispense with its problems.

The Lion Will Carry Israel Off Into Exile

5:14 I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I myself will tear them to pieces,
then I will carry them off, and no one will
be able to rescue them!

5:15 Then I will return again to my lair
until they have suffered their punish-
ment.¹

Then they will seek me;²
in their distress they will earnestly seek
me.

*Superficial Repentance Breeds False Assurance
of God's Forgiveness*

6:1 "Come on! Let's return to the LORD!
He himself has torn us to pieces,
but he will heal us!

He has injured³ us,
but he will bandage our wounds!

6:2 He will restore⁴ us in a very short
time;⁵

he will heal us in a little while,⁶
so that we may live in his presence.

6:3 So let us acknowledge him!⁷
Let us seek⁸ to acknowledge⁹ the LORD!

He will come to our rescue as certainly as
the appearance of the dawn,

¹ **tn** The verb יִשְׁמוּ (*ye'sh^emu*, Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from אָשַׁם, *asham*, "to be guilty") means "to bear their punishment" (Ps 34:22, 23 HT [34:21, 22 ET]; Prov 30:10; Isa 24:6; Jer 2:3; Hos 5:15; 10:2; 14:1; Zech 11:5; Ezek 6:6; BDB 79 s.v. אָשַׁם 3). Many English versions translate this as "admit their guilt" (NIV, NLT) or "acknowledge their guilt" (NASB, NRSV), but cf. NAB "pay for their guilt" and TEV "have suffered enough for their sins."

² **tn** *Heb* "seek my face" (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV); NAB "seek my presence."

³ **tn** "has struck"; NRSV "struck down."

⁴ **tn** The Piel of הָיָה (*khayah*) may mean: (1) to keep/preserve persons alive from the threat of premature death (1 Kgs 20:31; Ezek 13:18; 18:27); (2) to restore the dead to physical life (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; cf. NCV "will put new life in us"); or (3) to restore the dying back to life from the threat of death (Ps 71:20; BDB 311 s.v. הָיָה).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "after two days" (so KJV, NIV, NRSV). The expression "after two days" is an idiom meaning "after a short time" (see, e.g., Judg 11:4; BDB 399 s.v. יום 5.a).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "on the third day" (so NASB, NIV, NRSV), which parallels "after two days" and means "in a little while." The "2-3" sequence is an example of graded numerical parallelism (Prov 30:15-16, 18-19, 21-23, 24-28, 29-31). This expresses the unrepentant overconfidence of Israel that the Lord's discipline of Israel would be relatively short and that he would restore them quickly.

⁷ **tn** The object ("him") is omitted in the Hebrew text, but supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "let us pursue in order to know." The Hebrew term רָדַף (*radaf*, "to pursue") is used figuratively; "to aim to secure" (BDB 923 s.v. רָדַף 2). It describes the pursuit of a moral goal: "Do not pervert justice...nor accept a bribe...pursue [רָדַף] justice" (Deut 16:20); "those who pursue [רָדַף] righteousness and who seek [בָּקַשׁ] the Lord" (Isa 51:1); "He who pursues [רָדַף] righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor" (Prov 21:20); "Seek [בָּקַשׁ] peace and pursue [רָדַף] it" (Ps 34:15); "they slander me when I pursue [רָדַף] good" (Ps 38:21).

⁹ **tn** The Hebrew infinitive construct with לֵ (lamed) denotes purpose: "to know" [לְדַעַת, *lada'at*].

as certainly as the winter rain comes,
as certainly as the spring rain that waters
the land."

Transitory Faithfulness and Imminent Judgment

6:4 What am I going to do with you, O
Ephraim?

What am I going to do with you, O Ju-
dah?

For¹⁰ your faithfulness is as fleeting as the
morning mist;¹¹

it disappears as quickly as dawn's dew!¹²

6:5 Therefore, I will certainly cut¹³ you
into pieces at the hands of the proph-
ets;¹⁴

I will certainly kill you¹⁵ in fulfillment of
my oracles of judgment;¹⁶

for¹⁷ my judgment¹⁸ will come forth like
the light of the dawn.¹⁹

¹⁰ **tn** The *vav* prefixed to הַכְּסִידִים (*v^ekhasad^ekhem*, "your faithfulness") functions in an explanatory sense ("For").

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "your faithfulness [so NCV; NASB "your loyalty"; NIV, NRSV, NLT "your love"] is like a morning cloud" (הַכְּסִידִים בְּעֵינֵי בֹקֵר, *v^ekhasad^ekhem ka'an-an-boqer*).

¹² **sn** The Hebrew poets and prophets frequently refer to the morning clouds as a simile for transitoriness (e.g., Job 7:9; Isa 44:22; Hos 6:4; 13:3; BDB 778 s.v. עָנָן 1.c). For discussion of this phenomena in Palestine, see Chaplin, *PEQ* (1883): 19.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "the dew departing early" (BDB 1014 s.v. יָשָׁבַע); cf. NRSV "the dew that goes away early." The Hiphil participle מִשְׁכִּימִים (*mashkimim*) means "to depart early" (Gen 19:27; Josh 8:14; Judg 19:9). The idiom means "early morning" (1 Sam 17:16).

¹³ **tn** The two suffix conjugation verbs חָתַטְתִּי (*khatsvati*, Qal perfect 1st person common singular from חָטַט, *khatsav*, "to cut into pieces") and הָרַגְתִּים (*haragtim*, Qal perfect 1st person common singular + 3rd person masculine plural suffix from הָרַג, *harag*, "to kill") are used in reference to future-time events. These are examples of the so-called "prophetic perfect" which emphasizes the certainty of the future event (e.g., Num 24:17; Josh 10:19; Isa 8:23 HT [9:1 ET]; 9:1 HT [9:2 ET]). For this function of the perfect, see *IBHS* 480-81 §30.1d. Most English versions, however, render these as past tenses.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "by the prophets" (so KJV, NRSV). The prophets are pictured as the executioners of Israel and Judah because they announced their imminent destruction. The prophetic word was endowed with the power of fulfillment.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "them." The shift from the 2nd person masculine singular referents ("you" and "you") in 6:4-5 to the 3rd person masculine plural referent ("them") is an example of enallage, a poetic device used for emphasis.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "with the words of my mouth" (so NIV); TEV "with my message of judgment and destruction."

¹⁷ **tn** The disjunctive *vav* prefixed to the noun וּמִשְׁפָּטֵיךָ (*umishpatekha*) has an explanatory function.

¹⁸ **tc** The MT reads וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי אֱוִיר יֵצֵא (*umishpatekha 'or yetse'*, "and your judgments [are] a light [which] goes forth") which is enigmatic and syntactically awkward (cf. KJV, NASB). The LXX reads καὶ τὸ κριμα σου ὡς φῶς (*kai to krima mou hōs phos*, "my judgment goes forth like light") which reflects וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי כְאוֹר יֵצֵא (*umishpati kha'or yetse'*, "my judgment goes forth like the light") and posits only a simple middivision of words. This is reflected in the Syriac Peshitta and Aramaic Targum and is followed by the present translation (so also NCV, NRSV). See D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:238.

¹⁹ **tn** The noun אֱוִיר (*'or*, "light") is used here in reference to the morning light or dawn (e.g., Judg 16:2; 19:26; 1 Sam 14:36; 25:34, 36; 2 Sam 17:22; 23:4; 2 Kgs 7:9; Neh 8:3; Job 24:14; Prov 4:18; Mic 2:1; cf. CEV, NLT) rather than lighting (cf. NIV). This continues the early morning imagery used

6:6 For I delight in faithfulness, not simply in sacrifice;
I delight⁴ in acknowledging God, not simply in whole burnt offerings.²

Indictments Against the Cities of Israel and Judah

6:7 At Adam³ they broke⁴ the covenant;
Oh how⁵ they were unfaithful⁶ to me!

throughout 6:2-5.

sn In 6:3 unrepentant Israel uttered an over-confident boast that the LORD would rescue the nation from calamity as certainly as the “light of the dawn” (שֶׁתָּרִי, *shakhar*) “comes forth” (יָצָא, *yets’e*) every morning. Playing upon the early morning imagery, the LORD responded in 6:4 that Israel’s prerequisite repentance was as fleeting as the early morning dew. Now in 6:5, the LORD announces that he will indeed appear as certainly as the morning; however, it will not be to rescue but to punish Israel: punishment will “come forth” (יָצָא) like the “light of the dawn” (אִוֵר).

1 tn The phrase “I delight” does not appear in the Hebrew text a second time in this verse, but is implied from the parallelism in the preceding line.

2 sn Contrary to popular misunderstanding, Hosea does not reject animal sacrifice nor cultic ritual, and advocate instead obedience only. Rather, God does not delight in ritual sacrifice *without* the accompanying prerequisite moral obedience (1 Sam 15:22; Pss 40:6-8; 51:16-17; Prov 21:3; Isa 1:11-17; Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8). However, if prerequisite moral obedience is present, he delights in sacrificial worship as an outward expression (Ps 51:19). Presented by a repentant obedient worshiper, whole burnt offerings were “an aroma pleasing” to the LORD (Lev 1:9, 13).

3 tn Or “Like Adam”; or “Like [sinful] men.” The MT reads בְּאָדָם (*k’adam*, “like Adam” or “as [sinful] men”); however, the editors of *BHS* suggest this reflects an orthographic confusion of בְּאָדָם (*b’adam*, “at Adam”), as suggested by the locative adverb שָׁם (*sham*, “there”) in the following line. However, שָׁם sometimes functions in a nonlocative sense similar to the deictic particle הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, “Behold!”). The singular noun אָדָם (*adam*) has been taken in several different ways: (1) proper name: “like Adam” (בְּאָדָם), (2) collective singular: “like [sinful] men” (בְּאָדָם), (3) proper location: “at Adam,” referring to a city in the Jordan Valley (Josh 3:16), emending comparative כִּי (*kaf*) to locative בֵּי (*bet*, “at”): “at Adam” (בְּאָדָם). BDB 9 s.v. אָדָם 2 suggests the collective sense, referring to sinful men (Num 5:6; 1 Kgs 8:46; 2 Chr 6:36; Jer 10:14; Job 31:33; Hos 6:7). The English versions are divided: KJV margin, ASV, RSV margin, NASB, NIV, TEV margin, NLT “like Adam”; RSV, NRSV, TEV “at Adam”; KJV “like men.”

4 tn The verb עָבַר (*avar*) refers here to breaking a covenant and carries the nuance “to overstep, transgress” (BDB 477 s.v. עָבַר 1). Cf. NAB “violated”; NRSV “transgressed.”

5 tn The adverb שָׁם (*sham*) normally functions in a locative sense meaning “there” (BDB 1027 s.v. שָׁם). This is how it is translated by many English versions (e.g., KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV). However, in poetry שָׁם sometimes functions in a nonlocative sense to introduce expressions of astonishment or when a scene is vividly visualized in the writer’s imagination (see BDB 1027 s.v. 1.a.β), or somewhat similar to the deictic particle הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, “Behold!”): “See [שָׁם] how the evildoers lie fallen!” (Ps 36:13 HT [36:12 ET]); “Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter! See [שָׁם]! The shouting of the warrior!” (Zeph 1:14); “They saw [רָאוּ, *ra’u*] her and were astonished...See [שָׁם] how trembling seized them!” (Ps 48:7). In some cases, it introduces emphatic statements in a manner similar to הִנֵּה (“Behold!”): “Come and see [רָאוּ], *l’khu ur’u*! what God has done...Behold [שָׁם], let us rejoice in him!” (Ps 66:5); “See/Behold [שָׁם]! I will make a horn grow for David” (Ps 132:17). The present translation’s use of “Oh how!” in Hos 6:7 is less visual than the Hebrew idiom שָׁם (“See! See how!”), but it more closely approximates the parallel English idiom of astonishment.

6 tn The verb בָּגַד (*bagad*, “to act treacherously”) is often used in reference to faithlessness in covenant relationships

6:8 Gilead is a city full of evildoers;⁷ its streets are stained with bloody footprints!⁸

6:9 The company of priests is like a gang of robbers,
lying in ambush to pounce on a victim.
They commit murder on the road to Shechem;
they have done heinous crimes!

6:10 I have seen a disgusting thing in the temple of Israel:
there Ephraim practices temple prostitution
and Judah defiles itself.

6:11 I have appointed a time to reap judgment⁹ for you also, O Judah!

If Israel Would Repent of Sin, God Would Relent of Judgment

Whenever I want to restore the fortunes of my people,¹⁰

7:1 whenever I want to heal Israel,
the sin of Ephraim is revealed,
and the evil deeds of Samaria are exposed.

For they do what is wrong;
thieves break into houses,
and gangs rob people out in the streets.

7:2 They do not realize¹¹
that I remember all of their wicked deeds.
Their evil deeds have now surrounded them;
their sinful deeds are always before me.¹²

Political Intrigue and Conspiracy in the Palace

7:3 The royal advisers delight the king
with their evil schemes,

(BDB 93 s.v. בָּגַד).

7 tn The participle phrase פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן (*po’ale’aven*, “workers of wickedness”) emphasizes continual (uninterrupted), habitual action. This particular use of the participle is an ironic play on the professional occupation function (see *IBHS* 615 §37.2c). In effect, the major “professional guild” in Gilead is evil-working; the people are producers of evil!

8 tn Heb “it is foot-tracked with blood”; NAB “tracked with (+ footprints of NLT) blood.”

9 tn Heb “a harvest is appointed for you also, O Judah” (similar ASV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

10 tc In the verse divisions of the MT (Leningrad Codex and Aleppo Codex), this is the last line of 6:11. However, the *BHK* and *BHS* editors suggest that it belongs with the beginning of 7:1. The ancient versions (Greek, Syriac, Latin) all reflect textual traditions that connect it with 6:11. The English versions are divided: some connect it with 6:11 (KJV, NASB, NLT), while others connect it with 7:1 (RSV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NJPS). The parallelism between this line and 7:1a favors connecting it with 7:1.

11 tn Heb “and they do not say in their heart”; TEV “It never enters their heads.”

12 tn Heb “they [the sinful deeds] are before my face” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NCV “they are right in front of me.”

the princes make him glad with their lies.
 7:4 They are all like bakers,¹
 they² are like a smoldering oven;
 they are like a baker who does not stoke
 the fire
 until the kneaded dough is ready for bak-
 ing.
 7:5 At the celebration³ of their king,⁴
 his princes become inflamed⁵ with wine;
 they conspire⁶ with evildoers.
 7:6 They approach him, all the while plot-
 ting against him.
 Their hearts are like an oven;
 their anger smolders all night long,
 but in the morning it bursts into a flam-
 ing fire.
 7:7 All of them are blazing like an oven;
 they devour their rulers.
 All of their kings fall –
 and none of them call on me!

Israel Lacks Discernment and Refuses to Repent

7:8 Ephraim has mixed itself like flour⁷
 among the nations;
 Ephraim is like a ruined cake of bread
 that is scorched on one side.⁸

¹ **tc** The MT reads מְנַאֲפִים (*mēna'afim*, “adulterers”; *Piel* participle masculine plural from נָאֵף, *na'af*, “to commit adultery”), which does not seem to fit the context. The original reading was probably אֹפִים (*ofim*, “bakers”; *Qal* participle masculine plural from אָפָה, *'afah*, “to bake”), which harmonizes well with the baker/oven/fire motif in 7:4-7. The textual deviation was caused by: (1) confusion of נ (*nun*) and ו (*vav*), (2) metathesis of ו/נ (*vav/nun*) and א (*alef*), and (3) dittography of מ (*mem*) from the preceding word. Original מְנַאֲפִים (*kullam 'ofim*, “all of them are bakers”) was confused for מְנַאֲפִים (“all of them are adulterers”). In spite of this most English versions follow the reading of the MT here.

² **tc** The MT preserves the enigmatic כְּבֹו תִנּוֹר בְּעֵרָהּ (*kēmo tannur bo'erah me*, “Like a burning oven, from...?”). The adjectival participle בְּעֵרָהּ (“burning”) is feminine while the noun תִּנּוֹר (*tannur*, “oven”) that it modifies is masculine. The *BHS* editors solve this problem by simply redividing the words: כְּבֹו הֵם בְּעֵרָהּ (*kēmo tannur bo'er hem*, “they are like a burning oven”). This solution is followed by many English versions (e.g., NCV, NRSV, NLT).

³ **tn** *Heb* “the day of” (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV); NIV “On the day of the festival of our king”; NLT “On royal holidays.”

⁴ **tc** The MT preserves the awkward 1st person common plural suffix reading מְלַכֵּנוּ (*malakenu*, “our king”). The *BHS* editors suggest reading the 3rd person masculine plural suffix מְלַכֵּם (*malakam*, “their king”; so CEV), as reflected in the Aramaic Targum.

⁵ **tc** The MT vocalizes the consonants הֲחָלוּ אֶת הַחָלוּ a Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural from חָלָהוּ (“to become sick”). However, this is syntactically awkward. The *BHS* editors suggest revocalizing it as Hiphil infinitive construct + 3rd person masculine singular suffix from חָלַל (*khalal*, “to begin”) or Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural from חָלַל. For a discussion of this textual problem, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:240.

tn *Heb* “when their king began [to reign].”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “he joined hands”; NCV “make agreements.”

⁷ **tn** The words “like flour” are not in the Hebrew text, but are implied by the imagery.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “a cake of bread not turned.” This metaphor compares Ephraim to a ruined cake of bread that was not turned over in time to avoid being scorched and burned (see BDB 728 s.v. טָבַח). Cf. NLT “as worthless as a half-baked cake.”

7:9 Foreigners are consuming what his
 strenuous labor produced,⁹
 but he does not recognize it!
 His head is filled with gray hair,
 but he does not realize it!
 7:10 The arrogance of Israel testifies
 against him,
 yet they refuse to return to the LORD their
 God!
 In spite of all this they refuse to seek
 him!

Israel Turns to Assyria and Egypt for Help

7:11 Ephraim has been like a dove,
 easily deceived and lacking discernment.
 They called to Egypt for help;
 they turned to Assyria for protection.
 7:12 I will throw my bird net over them
 while they are flying,
 I will bring them down like birds in the
 sky;
 I will discipline them when I hear them
 flocking together.

Israel Has Turned Away from the Lord

7:13 Woe to them! For they have fled
 from me!
 Destruction to them! For they have re-
 belled against me!
 I want to deliver¹⁰ them,
 but they have lied to me.
 7:14 They do not pray to me,¹¹
 but howl in distress on their beds;
 They slash themselves¹² for grain and new
 wine,
 but turn away from me.

7:15 Although I trained and strengthened
 them,¹³

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “foreigners consume his strength”; NRSV “devour (sap NIV) his strength.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “redeem” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); NCV, TEV “save”; CEV “I would have rescued them.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “they do not cry out to me in their heart”; NLT “with sincere hearts.”

¹² **tc** The MT reads יִתְגֹּדְדוּ (*yitgoraru*) which is either (1) Hitpolel imperfect 3rd person masculine plural (“they assemble themselves”; so KJV, NASB) from גָּדַד (*gur*, “to sojourn”; BDB 157 s.v. גָּדַד) or (2) Hitpolel imperfect 3rd person masculine plural (“they excite themselves”) from גָּדַד (*gur*, “to stir up”; BDB 158 s.v. גָּדַד). However, the Hebrew lexicographers suggest that both of these options are unlikely. Several other Hebrew mss preserve an alternate textual tradition of יִתְגֹּדְדוּ (*yitgodaadu*) which is a Hitpolel imperfect 3rd person common plural (“they slash themselves”) from גָּדַד (*gadad*, “to cut”; BDB 151 s.v. גָּדַד), as also reflected in the LXX (cf. NAB “they lacerated themselves”; NRSV, TEV “gash themselves”; NLT “cut themselves.” This reflects the pagan Canaanite cultic practice of priests cutting themselves and draining their blood on the ground to elicit agricultural fertility by resurrecting the slain fertility god Baal from the underworld (Deut. 14:1; 1 Kgs 18:28; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5). Cf. CEV which adds “in the hope that Baal will bless their crops.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “their arms” (so NAB, NRSV).

they plot evil against me!
7:16 They turn to Baal;⁴
 they are like an unreliable bow.
 Their leaders will fall by the sword
 because their prayers to Baal² have made
 me angry.
 So people will disdain them in the land
 of Egypt.³

God Will Raise Up the Assyrians to Attack Israel

8:1 Sound the alarm!⁴
 An eagle⁵ looms over the temple of the
 LORD!
 For they have broken their covenant with
 me,⁶
 and have rebelled against my law.
8:2 Israel cries out to me,
 “My God, we acknowledge you!”
8:3 But Israel has rejected what is morally
 good;
 so an enemy will pursue him.

The Political and Cultic Sin of Israel

8:4 They enthroned kings without my
 consent!⁷
 They appointed princes without my ap-
 proval!⁸
 They made idols out of their silver and
 gold,
 but they will be destroyed!⁹
8:5 O Samaria, he has rejected your calf
 idol!
 My anger burns against them!
 They will not survive much longer with-
 out being punished.¹⁰

even though they are Israelites!
8:6 That idol was made by a workman – it
 is not God!
 The calf idol of Samaria will be broken
 to bits.

The Fertility Cultists Will Become Infertile

8:7 They sow the wind,
 and so they will reap the whirlwind!
 The stalk does not have any standing
 grain;
 it will not produce any flour.
 Even if it were to yield grain,
 foreigners would swallow it all up.
8:8 Israel will be swallowed up among the
 nations;
 they will be like a worthless piece of pot-
 tery.

The Willful Donkey and the Wanton Harlot

8:9 They have gone up to Assyria,
 like a wild donkey that wanders off.
 Ephraim has hired prostitutes as lovers.¹¹
8:10 Even though they have hired lovers
 among the nations,¹²
 I will soon gather them together for judg-
 ment.¹³
 Then¹⁴ they will begin to waste away
 under the oppression of a mighty king.¹⁵

Sacrifices Ineffective without Moral Obedience

8:11 Although Ephraim has built many
 altars for sin offerings,
 these have become altars for sinning!
8:12 I spelled out my law for him in great
 detail,
 but they regard it as something totally
 unknown¹⁶ to them!
8:13 They offer up sacrificial gifts to me,
 and eat the meat,
 but the LORD does not accept their sacri-
 fices.¹⁷

¹ **tc** The MT reads the enigmatic *ישבו לו לעל* (*yashuvu lo' 'al*) which is taken variously: “they turn, but not upward” (NASB); “they do not turn to the Most High” (NIV); “they return, but not to the most High” (KJV). The BHS editors suggest *ישבו לבב לעל* (*yashuvu labba' al*, “they turn to Baal”; so RSV) or *ישבו לבב ליעל* (*yashuvu labb'liyya' al*, “they turn to Belial”) which is reflected by the LXX.

² **tn** *Heb* “because their tongue.” The term “tongue” is used figuratively, as a metonymy of cause (tongue) for the effect (prayers to Baal).

³ **tn** *Heb* “this [will] be for scorn in the land of Egypt”; NIV “they will be ridiculed (NAB shall be mocked) in the land of Egypt.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “A horn unto your gums!”; NAB “A trumpet to your lips!”

⁵ **tn** Or perhaps “A vulture.” Some identify the species indicated by the Hebrew term *נֶשֶׁר* (*nesher*) as the griffon vulture (cf. NEB, NRSV).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “my covenant” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV); TEV “the covenant I made with them.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “but without me”; NCV “without asking my permission”; CEV “without consulting me.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “but I did not know”; NRSV “but without my knowledge.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “in order to be cut off.” The text gives the impression that they made the idols for this purpose, but the language is ironic and sarcastic, bringing out the futility of their efforts. One could paraphrase, “they made idols...but only so that they might be destroyed.” Though they had other plans for the idols, God’s judgment would bring their intentions to naught.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “How long will they be able to be free from punishment?” This rhetorical question affirms that Israel will not survive much longer until God punishes it.

¹¹ **tn** Or “has hired herself out to lovers”; cf. NIV “has sold herself to lovers.”

¹² **tn** Or “they have hired themselves out to lovers”; cf. NASB “they hire allies among the nations.”

¹³ **tn** The Piel stem of *קָבַץ* (*qavats*) is often used in a positive sense, meaning “to regather” a dispersed people (*HALOT* 1063 s.v. *קָבַץ* 3.a; BDB 868 s.v. *קָבַץ* 1.α). However, in Hosea 8:10 it is used in a negative sense, meaning “to assemble (people) for judgment” (e.g., Ezek 20:34; Hos 9:6; *HALOT* 1063 s.v. 3.e.i.). Cf. JPS “I will hold them fast” (in judgment, see the parallel in 9:6).

¹⁴ **tn** The vav consecutive + preterite *וַיִּקְהַל* (*vayyakhellu*, Hiphil preterite 3rd person common plural from *קָהַל*, *khalal*, “to begin”) denotes temporal subordination to the preceding clause: “then...” (so NLT); cf. TEV, CEV “Soon.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “a king of princes” (cf. KJV, NASB); TEV “the emperor of Assyria.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “foreign” or “alien”; NASB, NRSV “as a strange thing.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “does not accept them”; the referent (their sacrifices) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

Soon he will remember their wrongdoing,
he will punish their sins,
and they will return to Egypt.
8:14 Israel has forgotten his Maker and
built royal palaces,
and Judah has built many fortified cities.
But I will send fire on their cities;
it will consume their royal citadels.

Fertility Cult Festivals Have Intoxicated Israel

9:1 O Israel, do not rejoice jubilantly¹
like the nations,
for you are unfaithful² to your God.
You love to receive a prostitute's wages³
on all the floors where you thresh your
grain.
9:2 Threshing floors and wine vats will
not feed the people,⁴
and new wine only deceives them.⁵

Assyrian Exile Will Reverse the Egyptian Exodus

9:3 They will not remain in the LORD's
land.
Ephraim will return to Egypt;
they will eat ritually unclean food in As-
syria.
9:4 They will not pour out drink offerings
of wine to the LORD;
they will not please him with their sacri-
fices.
Their sacrifices will be like bread eaten
while in mourning;
all those who eat them will make them-
selves ritually unclean.
For their bread will be only to satisfy
their appetite;
it will not come into the temple of the
LORD.
9:5 So what will you do on the festival day,
on the festival days of the LORD?

No Escape for the Israelites This Time!

9:6 Look!⁶ Even if⁷ they flee from the
destruction,

Egypt will take hold⁸ of them,
and Memphis will bury them.
The weeds will inherit the silver they
treasure⁹ –
thorn bushes will occupy their homes.¹⁰
9:7 The time of judgment¹¹ is about to ar-
rive!¹²
The time of retribution¹³ is imminent!¹⁴
Let Israel know!¹⁵

Israel Rejects Hosea's Prophetic Exhortations

The prophet is considered a fool¹⁶ –
the inspired man¹⁷ is viewed as a mad-
man¹⁸ –
because of the multitude of your sins
and your intense¹⁹ animosity.

⁸ tn The verb קָבַץ (*qavats*, "to gather together") should be nuanced "grab hold" in this context (HALOT 1063 s.v. קָבַץ). This pictures a personified Egypt taking the fugitives prisoner.

⁹ tn Heb "the treasured things of their silver"; NASB, NIV, TEV, NLT "treasures of silver."

¹⁰ tn Heb "their tents" (so NIV, NRSV); CEV "your tents."

¹¹ tn Heb "the days of the visitation"; NASB, NIV, NRSV "the days of punishment."

¹² tn Heb "has come" (בָּא, *ba'u*). The two perfect tense (suffix-conjugation) verbs בָּא (Qal repeated 3rd person common plural from בָּא, *bo'*, "to come") repeated in this verse are both examples of the so-called "prophetic perfect": the perfect, which connotes completed or factual action, is used in reference to future events to emphasize the certainty of the announced event taking place.

¹³ tn Heb "the days of the retribution"; NIV "of reckoning"; NRSV "of recompense."

¹⁴ tn Heb "has come"; NIV "are at hand"; NLT "is almost here."

¹⁵ tc The Aleppo Codex and Leningrad Codex (the MT ms employed for BHS) both place the *atnach* (colon-divider) after יִדְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל (*yed'u yisra'el*, "Let Israel know!"), indicating that this line belongs with 9:7a (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV). However, the LXX reads κακοθησεται (*kakothēsetai*) which reflects an underlying *Vorlage* of יָרַעוּ (*yare'u*, Qal imperfect 3rd person common plural from יָרַע, *yara'*, "to cry"), as opposed to the MT יִדְעוּ (*yed'u*, Qal jussive 3rd person common plural from יָדַע, *yada'*, "to know"). The Old Greek connects יִדְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל ("Israel cries out") with the following lines (cf. NRSV), which appear to be quotations of Israel mocking Hosea. Aquila (ἔγνω, *egnō*) and Symmachus (γνώσεται, *gnōsetai*) both reflect the proto-MT tradition. For a discussion of this textual and syntactical problem, see H. W. Wolff, *Hosea* (Hermeneia), 150.

¹⁶ tn Or "is distraught"; cf. CEV, NLT "are crazy."

¹⁷ tn Heb "the man of the Spirit"; NASB, NRSV "spirit."

¹⁸ tn Or "is driven to despair." The term מְשֻׁחָּג (*me^sshugga'*, Pual participle masculine singular from שָׁחַג, *shaga'*, "to be mad") may be understood in two senses: (1) It could be a predicate adjective which is a figure of speech: "to be mad-dened," to be driven to despair (Deut 28:34); or (2) it could be a substantive: "a madman," referring to prophets who attempted to enter into a prophetic state through whipping themselves into a frenzy (1 Sam 21:16 HT [21:15 ET]; 2 Kgs 9:11; Jer 29:26; see BDB 993 s.v. שָׁחַג). The prophetic context of 9:7 favors the latter option (which is followed by most English versions). Apparently, the general populace viewed these antics with suspicion and questioned the legitimacy of their claim to be true prophets (e.g., 2 Kgs 9:11; Jer 29:26).

¹⁹ tn Heb "great."

¹ tn Heb "do not rejoice unto jubilation"; KJV "Rejoice not... for joy"; NASB "Do not rejoice...with exultation."

² tn Heb "you have committed adultery"; NRSV "you have played the whore."

³ tn Heb "you love the wages of the prostitute" (NIV similar); NAB "loving a harlot's hire."

⁴ tn Heb "them"; the referent (the people) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ tn Heb "her" (so KJV, ASV). This is taken as a collective singular (so also most modern English versions).

⁶ tn The deictic particle הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, "Behold!") is used frequently in prophetic announcements, introducing a solemn or important declaration, particularly in threats of judgment (BDB 244 s.v. הִנֵּה ב.β). Many modern English versions leave this particle untranslated here.

⁷ tn The conjunction כִּי (*ki*) introduces a concessive clause: "Although, when, if, even if" (BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.c.β). It has a force approximating "even if" (so NIV, NCV, NRSV, CEV, NLT), but it represents a situation as more likely to occur than אִם (*'im*, "if"). The concessive use of כִּי is normally followed by an imperfect, but occasionally a perfect is used, as is the case here (e.g., Mic 7:8; Nah 1:10; Pss 21:12; 119:83).

9:8 The prophet¹ is a watchman² over Ephraim³ on behalf of God,⁴ yet traps⁵ are laid for him along all of his paths,⁶ animosity rages against him in the land⁷ of his God.

The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

9:9 They have sunk deep into corruption⁸

1 tc The Leningrad Codex (the MT^{MS} used for *BHS*) and Aleppo Codex both place the *atnach* (colon divider) after אֱלֹהֵי (“my God”) and connect נְבִיא (navi’, “prophet”) with the following colon. On the other hand, *BHS* suggests that נְבִיא (navi’, “prophet”) belongs with the first colon. For discussion of this syntactical problem, see F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (AB), 533-34.

2 tc The syntax of this line is difficult, and the text is questionable. The major options include: (1) Adopt the MT vocalization and *BHS* line division: נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי נְבִיא (tsofeh ‘efrayim ‘im-elohay navi’, “The prophet is a watchman over Ephraim with my God [= on behalf of God]”). There are two problems with this: (a) Although *BHS* places נְבִיא (“prophet”) with this colon, the Aleppo Codex and Leningrad Codex both connect נְבִיא with the next colon (as do KJV, ASV). (b) The phrase אֱלֹהֵי נְבִיא (“with my God”) is difficult to explain. (2) Adopt the MT vocalization and the MT line division: נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי (“Ephraim is a watchman with my God,” cf. NASB). The problem with this, of course, is that Ephraim hardly fits the description of a prophetic watchman. (3) Revocalize the MT and adopt *BHS* line division: נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי (“Ephraim – the people of my God! – lies in ambush for the prophet”) This involves: (a) revocalization of the preposition עִם (“im,” “with”) to the noun עַם (“am,” “people”), (b) taking עִם אֱלֹהֵי (“people of my God”) in apposition to אֱלֹהֵי (“Ephraim”), and (c) nuancing נְבִיא as “to lie in wait (=set ambush)” (e.g., Ps 37:32). This is contextually attractive and harmonizes well with the following line: “traps are laid along all of his paths.” However, it has two problems: (a) there is no textual evidence supporting the revocalization of עִם as “people” and (b) the unusual nuance “to lie in wait” for נְבִיא occurs only in Ps 37:32, where it takes the preposition לָ (lamed), i.e., “to lie in wait for the righteous”; HALOT 1044 s.v. נְבִיא 4). (4) Emend אֱלֹהֵי (“my God”) to אֹהֶל (“ohel,” “tent”), as suggested in the *BHS* textual apparatus: נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי נְבִיא אֱלֹהֵי (“Ephraim spies on the prophet’s tent”). The verb נְבִיא may mean “to spy on” (BDB 859 s.v. נְבִיא; HALOT 1044 s.v. נְבִיא 3); however, the preposition עִם (‘im) does not normally mean “upon” and נְבִיא is not used with עִם elsewhere.

3 tn Or “Ephraim is a watchman with my God”; cf. ASV, NASB.

4 tn Heb “with my God” (so ASV, NASB).

5 tn Heb “bird trap of a bird catcher” or “snare of a fowler” (so KJV).

6 tc Or “The prophet is like a trap along all of his paths.” The Aleppo Codex and Leningrad Codex (MS used in *BHS*) both connect נְבִיא (navi’, “prophet”) with this colon. On the other hand, *BHS* places נְבִיא (“prophet”) at the end of the preceding colon.

7 tn Heb “house.” The term בַּיִת (bayit, “house”) is used as a figure of speech, referring to either (1) the temple or official sanctuaries (so TEV, CEV) or (2) the land of Israel (e.g., Hos 9:15).

8 tn Or more literally, “they are deeply corrupted.” The two verbs העֲמִיקוּר שְׂחָתוּ (he‘miqur shikhetu; literally, “they have made deep, they act corruptly”) are coordinated without a conjunction *vav* to form a verbal hendiadys: the second verb represents the main idea, while the first functions adverbially (GKC 386-87 §120.g). Here Gesenius suggests “they are deeply/radically corrupted.” Several translations mirror the syntax of this hendiadys: “They have deeply corrupted themselves” (KJV, ASV, NRSV), “They have been grievously corrupted” (NJPJS), and “They are hopelessly evil” (TEV). Others reverse the syntax for the sake of a more graphic English idiom: “They have gone deep in depravity” (NASB) and “They

as in the days of Gibeah.

He will remember their wrongdoing.

He will repay them for their sins.

9:10 When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the wilderness.

I viewed your ancestors⁹ like an early fig on a fig tree in its first season.

Then they came to Baal-Peor and they

dedicated themselves to shame –

they became as detestable as what they loved.

The Fertility Worshipers Will Become Infertile

9:11 Ephraim will be like a bird; what they value¹⁰ will fly away.

They will not bear children – they will not enjoy pregnancy – they will not even conceive!¹¹

9:12 Even if they raise their children,

I will take away every last one of them.¹² Woe to them!

For I will turn away from them.

9:13 Just as lion cubs are born predators,¹³ so Ephraim will bear his sons for slaughter.

9:14 Give them, O LORD – what will you give them?

Give them wombs that miscarry, and breasts that cannot nurse!¹⁴

9:15 Because of all their evil in Gilgal, I hate them there.

On account of their evil deeds, I will drive them out of my land.¹⁵

I will no longer love them;

all their rulers are rebels.

9:16 Ephraim will be struck down¹⁶ –

their root will be dried up; they will not yield any fruit.

Even if they do bear children,

have sunk deep into corruption” (NIV). Some translations fail to represent the hendiadys at all: “You are brutal and corrupt” (CEV). The translation “They are deeply corrupted” mirrors the Hebrew syntax, but “They have sunk deep into corruption” is a more graphic English idiom and is preferred here (cf. NAB “They have sunk to the depths of corruption”).

9 tn Heb “fathers”; a number of more recent English versions use the more general “ancestors” here.

10 tn Heb “their glory” (so NASB); TEV “Israel’s greatness.”

11 tn Heb “no childbearing, no pregnancy, no conception.” The preposition מִן (min) prefixed to the three parallel nouns functions in a privative sense, indicating deprivation (BDB 583 s.v. מִן 7).

12 tn Heb “I will bereave them from a man”; NRSV “I will bereave them until no one is left.”

13 tc The MT is corrupt in 9:13. The *BHS* editors suggest emending the text to follow the LXX reading. See D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:250-51.

14 tn Heb “breasts that shrivel up dry”; cf. KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV “dry breasts.”

15 tn Heb “out of my house” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV); TEV, NCV, NLT “my land.”

16 tn Or perhaps, following the plant metaphor, “will be blighted” (NIV similar).

I will kill their precious offspring.
9:17 My God will reject them,
 for they have not obeyed him;
 so they will be fugitives among the
 nations.

Israel is Guilty of Fertility Cult Worship

10:1 Israel was a fertile vine
 that yielded fruit.
 As his fruit multiplied,
 he multiplied altars to Baal.¹
 As his land prospered,
 they adorned the fertility pillars.
10:2 Their heart is slipping;
 soon they will be punished for their guilt.
 The LORD² will break their altars;
 he will completely destroy their fertility
 pillars.

*The Lord Will Punish Israel by Removing Its
 Kings*

10:3 Very soon they will say, “We have
 no king
 since we did not fear the LORD.
 But what can a king do for us anyway?”
10:4 They³ utter empty words,⁴
 taking⁵ false oaths and making empty⁶
 agreements.
 Therefore legal disputes sprout up

like poisonous weeds⁷ in the furrows of a
 plowed field.

*The Calf Idol and Idolaters of Samaria Will Be
 Exiled*

10:5 The inhabitants⁸ of Samaria will la-
 ment⁹ over the calf idol¹⁰ of Beth Aven.¹¹
 Its people will mourn over it;
 its idolatrous priests will wail¹² over it,¹³
 because its splendor will be taken from
 them¹⁴ into exile.
10:6 Even the calf idol¹⁵ will be carried to
 Assyria,

¹ **tn** The phrase “to Baal” does not appear in the Hebrew text here, but is implied; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity. Cf. NCV “altars for idols”; NLT “altars of their foreign gods.”

² **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

³ **tc** The referent of the 3rd person common plural verb דָּבְרוּ (*dibb^eru*, “they speak”) is the masculine singular noun מֶלֶךְ (*melek*, “a king” in v. 3) which is used generically, representing all human kings of Israel to which the 3rd common plural verb refers. Although this is a bit syntactically awkward, it is not necessary to emend the MT to the 3rd masculine singular verb form דָּבַר (*davar*, “he speaks”) as the *BHS* editors suggest. The LXX, however, reads the singular form λαλῶν (*lalōn*, “uttering”).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “they speak words.” The cognate accusative construction דָּבְרוּ דְבָרִים (*dibb^eru d^evarim*; literally, “they speak words”) is an idiom that means “they speak mere words” (so NASB; NRSV similar) or “they utter empty words” (so TEV), that is, they make empty promises (e.g., Isa 58:13; BDB 180-181 s.v. דָּבַר 2). The immediately following collocated phrase אָלוֹת שָׁוְיָ (*alot shav^e*, “swearing an empty oath”) confirms this nuance. The LXX understood this idiom in the same way: λαλῶν ῥήματα προφάσειας ψευδεῖς (*lalōn rhēmata prophasias pseudeis*, “speaking false professions as his words”).

⁵ **tn** The two infinitive absolutes אָלוֹת (*alot*, Qal infinitive absolute from II אָלַה, “to swear an oath”; BDB 46 s.v. II אָלַה) and כָּרַת (*karot*, Qal infinitive absolute from כָּרַת, *karat*, “to make [a covenant]”; BDB 503 s.v. כָּרַת 4), which appear without conjunctions, continue the description of the action of the preceding finite verb דָּבְרוּ (*dibb^eru*, Piel perfect 3rd person common plural from דָּבַר, *davar*, “to speak”). Although the infinitives continue the description of the action of the finite verb, they call special attention to the action of the infinitive rather than the action of the finite verb. See *IBHS* 595 §35.5.2b.

⁶ **tn** The word “empty” is not in the Hebrew text, but is implied. It is supplied in the translation for clarity. Cf. TEV “useless treaties.”

⁷ **tn** The noun II רוֹשׁ (*ro’sh*) refers to a “poisonous plant” (Deut 29:17; Hos 10:4) or “bitter herb” (Ps 69:22; Lam 3:5; BDB 912 s.v. רוֹשׁ 1; HALOT 1167 s.v. רוֹשׁ 1).

⁸ **tc** The MT reads the singular construct noun שָׁכֵן (*sh^ekhan*, “the inhabitant [of Samaria]”), while the LXX and Syriac reflect the plural construct noun שָׁכְנֵי (*sh^ekhan^e*, “the inhabitants [of Samaria]”). The singular noun may be a collective referring to the population of Samaria as a whole (BDB 1015 s.v. שָׁכֵן; e.g., Isa 33:24). Most English translations view this as a reference to the inhabitants of the city as a whole (KJV, RSV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NJPS, TEV, CEV, NLT).

⁹ **tc** The MT reads יָגוּרוּ (*yaguru*, Qal imperfect 3rd person common plural from III גָּר, *gur*, “to dread”; see BDB 159 s.v. III גָּר 1). This reading is followed by most English versions but is syntactically awkward because III גָּר (“to dread”) is used nowhere else with the preposition לְ (*lamed*, “they are in dread for...”). BDB suggests reading יָגוּדוּ (*yanudu*, Qal imperfect 3rd person common plural from גָּד, *gud*, “to lament”; BDB 626 s.v. גָּד 2.a) which harmonizes better with the parallelism with אָבַל (“*aval*, “to mourn”) in the following line. The verb יָגַד (“to lament”) is used with the preposition לְ in the idiom “to lament for” (e.g., Isa 51:19; Jer 15:5; 16:5; 48:17; Nah 3:7). This involves simple orthographic confusion between ג (gimel) and נ (nun), as well as ר (*resh*) and ד (*dalet*) which were often confused by the scribes.

¹⁰ **tc** The MT reads the plural לְגֵיזְלוֹת (*l^e’eglot*, “for the calves”), while some Greek versions (LXX, Theodotion) and the Syriac reflect the singular לְגֵיזְלוֹ (“for the calf [calf idol]”). The singular reading is preferred on the basis of internal evidence: the oracle denounces the calf idol worship of Samaria. The plural form probably arose due to the ambiguity of the term “calf” when a scribe did not realize that the term was being used as a metonymy for the worship of the Egyptian calf goddess. Most recent English versions adopt the singular form and relate it to the calf goddess cult (RSV, NASB, NIV, NCV, NJPS, TEV, CEV, NLT); however, older English versions follow the MT plural (KJV, ASV).

¹¹ **sn** See the note on the place name *Beth Aven* in 4:15.

¹² **tc** The MT appears to read יָגִילוּ (*yagilu*, “they will rejoice”; Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from יָגַל, *gil*, “to rejoice”), but this is likely an example of semantic polarization. See F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (AB), 556-67. The *BHS* editors propose the reading יָיִלוּ (*yelilu*, “they will lament”; Hiphal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from יָלַל, *yalal*, “to lament”), which also appears in Hos 7:14. If this reading is original, the textual variant may be attributed to: (1) orthographic confusion between ל (*lamed*) and נ (*gimel*), and (2) haplography or dittography of י (*yod*). English versions are split; some follow the MT (KJV, ASV, NIV, NJPS), others the proposed emendation (RSV, NASB, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

¹³ **tc** This line division follows the MT rather than the line division suggested by the *BHS* editors.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “from it” (so NAB, NRSV).

¹⁵ **tn** The antecedent of the 3rd person masculine singular direct object pronoun אֹתוֹ (“*oto*, “it”) is probably the calf idol of Beth Aven mentioned in 10:5a. This has been specified in the translation for clarity (cf. TEV, NLT).

as tribute for the great king.¹
 Ephraim will be disgraced;
 Israel will be put to shame because² of
 its wooden idol.³
 10:7 Samaria and its king will be carried
 off⁴
 like a twig⁵ on the surface of the waters.
 10:8 The high places of the “House⁶ of
 Wickedness”⁷ will be destroyed;

¹ **tc** The MT reads מֶלֶךְ יָרֵב (*melekh yarev*, “a king who contends”?) which is syntactically awkward: מֶלֶךְ (“king”) followed by יָרֵב (“let him contend!”); Qal jussive 3rd person masculine singular from יָרַב, *yiv*, “to contend”. Note that KJV, ASV, NASB treat this as a proper name (“king Jareb”). The MT reading is probably the result of faulty word division. As the BHS editors suggest, the original reading most likely is מְלִכֵי רָב (*mal'ki rav*, “the great king”). The suffixed י (*yod*) on מְלִכֵי is the remnant of the old genitive ending. This is the equivalent of the Assyrian royal epithet *sarru rabbu* (“the great king”). See also the **tc** note on the same phrase in 5:13.

² **tn** The preposition בְּ (*min*) functions in a causal sense specifying the logical cause: “because of” or “on account of” (e.g., Exod 2:23; Deut 7:7; Nah 3:4; BDB 580 s.v. בְּ 2.f; HALOT 598 s.v. בְּ 6).

³ **tn** The meaning of the root of מַעֲבָדוֹת (*me'atsato*, preposition בְּ, *min*, + feminine singular noun עֲבָדָה, *'etsah*, + 3rd person masculine singular suffix) is debated. There are three options: (1) “its counsel” from עֲבָדָה (“counsel; advice; plan”; BDB 420 s.v. עֲבָדָה; HALOT 867 s.v. עֲבָדָה 3.a); (2) “its disobedience” from לל עֲבָדָה (“disobedience,” but the existence of this root is debated; see HALOT 867 s.v. לל עֲבָדָה); and (3) “its wooden idol” from לל עֲבָדָה (“wood”; cf. Jer 6:6) referring to the wooden idol/effigy (the calf idol in 10:5), a stick of wood covered with gold (HALOT 867 s.v.). The last option is favored contextually: (a) the idol is called “a stick of wood” in Hos 4:12, and (b) the calf idol (probably the referent) of the cult is mentioned in 10:5. The English versions are divided: (1) “his idol” (RSV, NRSV), “its wooden idols” (NIV), “image” (NJPS margin), “that idol” (CEV), “this idol” (NLT); and (2) “his own counsel” (KJV, ASV), “its own counsel” (NASB), “his plans” (NJPS), “his schemes” (NAB), “the advice” (TEV).

⁴ **tn** The term נִדְמָה (*nidmeh*, Niphal participle feminine singular) is derived from נִדְמָה וּ נִדְמָה (*damah*; so BDB 198 s.v. נִדְמָה; HALOT 225 s.v. וּ נִדְמָה 3) “be cut off, cease to exist, be destroyed.” The Niphal form נִדְמָה (“will be destroyed”) is paralleled by the Niphal participle נִדְמָה (*nidmeh*, “will be destroyed”) in 10:8. Several English versions nuance the literal wording for the sake of the idiom: “will float away like a twig on the surface of the waters” (NIV), “Like a twig in a stream...will be swept away” (CEV), “will be carried off like a chip of wood on an ocean wave” (NLT).

⁵ **tn** The noun חֲבִיטָה (*qetsaf*) is a *hapax legomenon* (a term that occurs only once). Historically, it has been understood in two different ways: (1) “foam” (Vulgate, Aquila, Symmachus) and (2) “snapped-off twig” (LXX, Theodotion, Syriac Peshitta). Both interpretations make sense in the light of the simile. The latter has more support because of the related verb חָצַט (*qatsats*, “to cut off, chop off”) used in reference to wood (BDB 893 s.v. חָצַט; HALOT 1125 s.v. חָצַט) and the related feminine noun חֲבִיטָה (*qetsafah*, “stump; splinter” of fig-tree; BDB 893 s.v. חֲבִיטָה; HALOT 1125 s.v. חֲבִיטָה). English versions differ along these lines: (1) “foam” (KJV, NAB, NJPS) and (2) “chip” (NRSV, TEV, NCV, NLT), “stick” (NASB), “twig” (NIV, CEV).

⁶ **tn** Alternately, “Aven” (KJV, NAB, NRSV, NLT) for the city name “Beth Aven.” The term “Beth” (house) does not appear in the Hebrew text here, but is implied (e.g., Hos 4:15). It is supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁷ **tc** The MT reads בְּמוֹת אֵין (*bamot aven*, “high places of Aven”); however, several Hebrew mss read בְּמוֹת בֵּית אֵין (*bamot bet aven*, “high places of Beth Aven”). In Hos 4:15 the name בֵּית אֵין (“Beth Aven”; Heb “house of wickedness”) is a wordplay on “Bethel” (Heb “house of God”). It is possible that בְּמוֹת בֵּית אֵין (“high places of Beth Aven”) was original; בֵּית: בֵּית (“house”) dropped out as an unintentional scribal error by haplography due to presence of the consonants בֵּת in the preceding word

it is the place where Israel sins.
 Thorns and thistles will grow up over its
 altars.
 Then they will say to the mountains,
 “Cover us!”
 and to the hills, “Fall on us!”

Failure to Learn from the Sin and Judgment of Gibeah

10:9 O Israel, you have sinned since the
 time⁸ of Gibeah,
 and there you have remained.

Did not war overtake the evildoers in
 Gibeah?

10:10 When I please,⁹ I will discipline
 them;¹⁰

I will gather nations together to attack
 them,¹¹
 to bind them in chains¹² for their two
 sins.¹³

Fertility Imagery: Plowing, Sowing, and Reaping

10:11 Ephraim was a well-trained heifer
 who loved to thresh grain;
 I myself put a fine yoke¹⁴ on her neck.

בְּמוֹת (*bamot*, “high places”).

tn Heb “high places of wickedness” (בְּמוֹת אֵין, *bamot aven*); so NIV. The noun אֵין (“wickedness”) is an attributive genitive: “wicked high places.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “days” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

⁹ **tn** Heb “in my desire”; ASV, NASB “When it is my desire”; NCV “When I am ready.”

¹⁰ **tc** The MT reads וְאֶסְרֶם (*v'essorem*, *vav* conjunction + Niphal imperfect 1st person common singular + 3rd person masculine plural suffix from אָסַר, *asar*, “to bind”). The LXX reads παῖδες αὐτῶν αὐτῶν (*paidesai autous*, “to discipline them”) which reflects a *Vorlage* of אֶסְרֶם (*issarem*, Qal imperfect 1st person common singular + 3rd person masculine plural suffix from אָסַר, *asar*, “to discipline”; BDB 416 s.v. אָסַר 3). The textual variant was caused by orthographic confusion between ו (*vav*) and י (*yod*) with metathesis of the two letters.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Nations will be gathered together against them.”

¹² **tn** The verb אָסַר (*asar*, “to bind”) often refers to conquered peoples being bound as prisoners (BDB 63 s.v. אָסַר). Here it is used figuratively to describe the Israelites being taken into exile. Cf. NIV “to put them in bonds.”

¹³ **tc** The Kethib is לִשְׁתֵּי עֵינָיִם (*lishte' enotam*, “for their two eyes”), while the Qere reads לִשְׁתֵּי עֵינָיִם (*lishte' enotam*, “for their two sins”). The phrase “two sins” could refer to (1) the sinful episode at Gibeah and the subsequent war between the tribe of Benjamin and the other tribes (Judges 19-21), or (2) the entire Gibeah incident (Judges 19-21) and Israel’s subsequent failure to repent up to the time of Hosea: “the time of Gibeah” (first sin) and “there you have remained” (second sin).

¹⁴ **tc** The MT is unintelligible: עֲלֵי-טוֹב (*al-tuv*, “upon a fine [thing]?”). Cf. KJV “I passed over upon her fair neck”; NRSV “I spared her fair neck.” The BHS editors suggest the revocalization עֲלֵי-טוֹב (*ol-tuv*, “a fine yoke”), followed by many modern English versions (e.g., NAB, NASB, NIV, NCV, TEV, NLT). The noun עֲלֵי (*ol*, “yoke”) also appears in 11:4 in a metaphor which compares Israel to a young heifer as well.

I will harness Ephraim.
 Let Judah plow!¹
 Let Jacob break up² the unplowed
 ground for himself!
10:12 Sow righteousness for yourselves,
 reap unfailing love.
 Break up the unplowed ground for your-
 selves,
 for it is time to seek the LORD,
 until he comes and showers deliverance³
 on you.
10:13 But you have plowed wickedness;
 you have reaped injustice;
 you have eaten the fruit of deception.
 Because you have depended on your
 chariots;⁴
 you have relied⁵ on your many warriors.

Bethel Will Be Destroyed Like Beth Arbel

10:14 The roar of battle will rise against
 your people;
 all your fortresses will be devastated,
 just as Shalman devastated⁶ Beth Arbel
 on the day of battle,
 when mothers were dashed to the ground
 with their children.
10:15 So will it happen to you, O Bethel,⁷
 because of your great wickedness!
 When that day dawns,⁸
 the king of Israel will be destroyed.⁹

¹ **tn** Or "Judah will plow" (so NASB); NIV, NRSV, CEV "Judah must plow."

² **tn** Or "Jacob will break up."

³ **tn** Or "righteousness" (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); NAB "justice."

⁴ **tc** The MT (followed by KJV, NASB) reads the enigmatic בַּרְבֵּךְ (*b^edark^akha*, "in your own way") which does not seem to fit the context or the parallelism with בְּרִבְרֵיךְ (*b^erov gibborekha*, "in your multitude of warriors"). The BHS editors suggest the original reading was בְּרִבְבֵּךְ (*b^erikhb^akha*, "in your chariots"), a reading followed by NAB, TEV. If this is correct, the textual corruption was caused by orthographic confusion between רֶבֶב (*rekhev*, "chariot") and דֶּרֶךְ (*derekh*, "way").

⁵ **tn** The phrase "you have relied" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism in the preceding line.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "as the devastation of Shalman." The genitive noun שְׁלֹמָן (*shalman*, "Shalman") functions as a subjective genitive: "as Shalman devastated [Beth Arbel]."

⁷ **map** For location see Map4-G4; Map5-C1; Map6-E3; Map7-D1; Map8-G3.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "when the dawn is cut off" or "when the day ceases." Cf. NLT "When the day of judgment dawns."

⁹ **tn** The root דָּמָה (*damah*, "to be cut off, cease to exist, be destroyed"; BDB 198 s.v. דָּמָה; HALOT 225 s.v. דָּמָה) is repeated in the Hebrew text. The form דָּמָה (*nidmoh*, Niphal infinitive absolute) appears in the first colon, and the form דָּמָה (*nidmah*, Niphal perfect 3rd person masculine singular) appears in the second colon. This striking repetition creates a dramatic wordplay which, for stylistic reasons, cannot be reproduced in English translations: "The moment the dawn ceases to exist (i.e., at the break of dawn), the king of Israel will cease to exist."

Reversal of the Exodus: Return to Egypt and Exile in Assyria

11:1 When Israel was a young man, I
 loved him like a son,¹⁰
 and I summoned my son¹¹ out of Egypt.
11:2 But the more I summoned¹² them,
 the farther they departed from me.¹³
 They sacrificed to the Baal idols
 and burned incense to images.

11:3 Yet it was I who led¹⁴ Ephraim,
 I took them by the arm;
 but they did not acknowledge
 that I had healed them.¹⁵
11:4 I led them with leather¹⁶ cords,
 with leather¹⁷ ropes;

¹⁰ **tn** The words "like a son" are not in the Hebrew text, but are necessary to clarify what sort of love is intended (cf. also NLT).

¹¹ **tc** The MT reads בְּנֵי (*v^eni*, "My son"); however, the LXX reflects בָּנָי (*vanav*, "his sons"). The MT should be retained as original here because of internal evidence; it is much more appropriate to the context.

¹² **tc** The MT reads קָרָאוּ (*qar'u*, "they called"; Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from קָרָא, *qara*, "to call"), cf. KJV, NASB; however, the LXX and Syriac reflect כָּרְאוּ (*k^eqar'i*, "as I called"; preposition *kaf*) + Qal infinitive construct from קָרָא + 1st person common singular suffix). The presence of the resumptive adverb כֵּן (*ken*, "even so") in the following clause supports the alternate textual tradition reflected in the LXX and Syriac (cf. NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, NLT).

¹³ **tc** The MT reads מִפְּנֵיהֶם (*mipp^enehem*, "from them"; preposition + masculine plural noun + 3rd person masculine plural suffix), so KJV, ASV, NASB; however, the LXX and Syriac reflect an alternate Hebrew textual tradition of מִפְּנֵי הֵם (*mippanay hem*, "they [went away] from me"; preposition + masculine plural noun + 1st person common singular suffix, followed by 3rd person masculine plural independent personal pronoun); cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV. The textual variant was caused simply by faulty word division.

¹⁴ **tn** Or "taught Ephraim to walk" (so ASV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV). The verb הִרְגַלְתִּי (*tirgalti*, "I taught [him] to walk, I led [him]"); Tiphil perfect 1st person common singular from רָגַל, *ragal*, "to walk") is an unusual verb stem: the Tiphil (properly Taphel) is attested three times in Biblical Hebrew (Hos 11:3; Jer 12:5; 22:15) and once in Biblical Aramaic (Ezra 4:7; see GKC 153 §55.h).

¹⁵ **tn** Or "that it was I who had healed them" (NIV, NLT similar).

¹⁶ **tn** Or "humane cords" or "cords of human kindness." The noun אָדָם (*adam*) is traditionally related to אָדָם ("man") and translated either literally or figuratively (as a metonymy of association for humane compassion): "cords of a man" (KJV, RSV margin, NASB), "cords of human kindness" (NIV, NCV), "human ties" (NJPS), "cords of compassion" (RSV). It is better to relate it to אָדָם II ("leather"; HALOT 14 s.v. אָדָם II), as the parallelism with אָהָבָה II (*ahavah*, "leather") suggests (see below). This homonymic root is well attested in Arabic *adam* ("skin") and *adim* ("tanned skin; leather"). This better fits the context of 11:4 which compares Israel to a heifer: the Lord led him with leather cords, lifted the yoke from his neck, and fed him. Elsewhere, Hosea compares Israel to a stubborn cow (4:6) and harnessed heifer (10:11).

¹⁷ **tn** Or "ropes of love." The noun אָהָבָה (*ahava*) is traditionally related to אָהָבָה I ("love"; BDB 13 s.v. אָהָבָה 2). This approach is adopted by most English translations: "bands of love" (KJV, RSV), "bonds of love" (NASB), "ties of love" (NIV), "cords of love" (NJPS). However, it is probably better to derive אָהָבָה from the homonymic root אָהָבָה II ("leather"; HALOT 18 s.v. אָהָבָה II). This root is attested in Arabic and Ugaritic. It probably occurs in the description of Solomon's sedan chair: "upholstered with purple linen, and lined with leather" (Song

I lifted the yoke⁴ from their neck,²
and gently fed them.³

11:5 They will return to Egypt!⁴
Assyria will rule over them⁵
because they refuse to repent!⁶

11:6 A sword will flash in their cities,
it will destroy the bars of their city gates,
and will devour them in their fortresses.

11:7 My people are obsessed⁷ with turn-
ing away from me;⁸
they call to Baal,⁹ but he will never exalt
them!

3:10). This fits the context of 11:4 which compares Israel to a young heifer: the LORD led him with leather ropes, lifted the yoke from his neck, and bent down to feed him. Elsewhere, Hosea compares Israel to a stubborn cow (4:6) and a young heifer harnessed for plowing (10:11). This is supported by the parallelism with אָדָם (‘adam, “leather”; HALOT 14 s.v. אָדָם). Of course, this might be an example of a homonymic word-play on both roots: “ropes of leather/love.” For discussions of אָדָם, see G. R. Driver, “Supposed Arabisms in the Old Testament,” *JBL* 55 (1936): 111; G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 133; S. E. Loewenstamm, *Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible*, 1:39. D. Grossberg, “Canticles 3:10 in the Light of a Homeric Analogue and Biblical Poetics,” *BTB* 11 (1981): 75-76. For homonymic wordplays, see W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry* [JSOTSup], 237-38; J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 151-55.

¹ **tn** Heb “And I was to them like those who lift a yoke.”

² **tn** Heb “their jaws” (so KJV, ASV, NASB).

³ **tn** Heb “him.” This is regarded as a collective singular by most English versions and thus translated as a plural pronoun.

⁴ **tc** Or “Will they not return to Egypt?” (so NIV). Following the LXX and BHS, the MT לֹא (‘lo’, “not”) should probably be read as לוֹ (‘lo, “to him”) and connected to the end of 11:4 rather than the beginning of 11:5. The textual confusion between לֹא and לוֹ probably reflects an unintentional scribal error due to a mistake in hearing (cf., e.g., *Kethib/Qere* in Ps 100:3).

⁵ **tn** Heb “Assyria, he will be his [Israel’s] king” (NASB similar).

⁶ **tn** Heb “return” (so KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV). The root שׁוּב (*shuv*, “to turn, return”) appears at the beginning and ending of this verse, creating an *inclusio*. This repetition produces an ironic wordplay: because Israel refuses to “return” to God or “turn” from its sin, it will “return” to Egypt. The punishment fits the crime.

⁷ **tn** The term תְּלוּאִים (*‘tlu’im*, Qal passive participle masculine plural from תָּלָא, “to hang”) literally means “[My people] are hung up” (BDB 1067 s.v. תָּלָא). The verb תָּלָא // תְּלוּ (‘to hang’) is often used in a concrete sense to describe hanging an item on a peg (Ps 137:2; Song 4:4; Isa 22:24; Ezek 15:3; 27:10) or the impaling of the body of an executed criminal (Gen 40:19, 22; 41:13; Deut 21:22, 23; Josh 8:29; 10:26; 2 Sam 21:12; Esth 2:23; 5:14; 6:4; 7:9, 10; 8:7; 9:13, 14, 25). It is used figuratively here to describe Israel’s moral inability to detach itself from apostasy. Several English versions capture the sense well: “My people are bent on turning away from me” (RSV, NASB), “My people are determined to turn from me” (NIV), “My people are determined to reject me” (CEV; NLT “desert me”), “My people persist in its defection from me” (NJPS), and “they insist on turning away from me” (TEV).

⁸ **tn** The 1st person common singular suffix on the noun מְשׁוּבָתִי (*m’shuvati*; literally, “turning of me”) functions as an objective genitive: “turning away from me.”

⁹ **tc** The meaning and syntax of the MT is enigmatic: וְאֵלֵי עֵלִי יִקְרְאוּ (*‘el-el’ al yiqra’uhu*, “they call upwards to him”). Many English versions including KJV, NIV, NRSV, NLT take the referent of “him” as the “most High.” The BHS editors suggest reading וְאֵלֵי בָּאֵל יִקְרְאוּ (*‘el-ba’ al yiqra’ velu*), “they call to Baal, but he...”), connecting the 3rd person masculine singular independent personal pronoun וְהֵיחָד (*‘elhu*, “but he...”) with

The Divine Dilemma: Judgment or Mercy?

11:8 How can I give you up,⁴⁰ O Ephraim?
How can I surrender you, O Israel?
How can I treat you like Admah?
How can I make you like Zeboiim?
I have had a change of heart!⁴¹
All my tender compassions are aroused!⁴²
11:9 I cannot carry out⁴³ my fierce anger!
I cannot totally destroy Ephraim!
Because I am God, and not man – the
Holy One among you –
I will not come in wrath!

God Will Restore the Exiles to Israel

11:10 He will roar like a lion,
and they will follow the LORD;
when he roars,
his children will come trembling⁴⁴ from
the west.

the following clause. The early Greek recensions (Aquila and Symmachus), as well as the Aramaic Targum and the Vulgate, vocalized עַל (‘al) as “yoke” (as in 11:4): “they cry out because of [their] yoke” (a reading following TEV).

⁴⁰ **tn** The imperfect verbs in 11:8 function as imperfects of capability. See *IBHS* 564 §34.1a.

⁴¹ **tn** The phrase יְבִיבֵךְ עָלַי לִבִּי (*nehpakh ‘alay libbi*) is an idiom that can be taken in two ways: (1) emotional sense: to describe a tumult of emotions, not just a clash of ideas, that are afflicting a person (Lam 1:20; HALOT 253 s.v. יְבִיבֵךְ 1.c) and (2) volitional sense: to describe a decisive change of policy, that is, a reversal of sentiment from amity to hatred (Exod 14:5; Ps 105:25; BDB 245 s.v. יְבִיבֵךְ 1; HALOT 253 s.v. 3). The English versions alternate between these two: (1) emotional discomfort and tension over the prospect of destroying Israel: “mine heart is turned within me” (KJV), “my heart recoils within me” (RSV, NRSV), “My heart is turned over within Me” (NASB), “My heart is torn within me” (NLT); and (2) volitional reversal of previous decision to totally destroy Israel: “I have had a change of heart” (NJPS), “my heart is changed within me” (NIV), and “my heart will not let me do it!” (TEV). Both BDB 245 s.v. 1.b and HALOT 253 s.v. 3 suggest that the idiom describes a decisive change of heart (reversal of decision to totally destroy Israel once and for all) rather than emotional turbulence of God shifting back and forth between whether to destroy or spare Israel. This volitional nuance is supported by the modal function of the 1st person common singular imperfects in 11:8 (“I will not carry out my fierce anger...I will not destroy Ephraim...I will not come in wrath”) and by the prophetic announcement of future restoration in 11:10-11. Clearly, a dramatic reversal both in tone and in divine intention occurs between 11:5-11.

⁴² **tn** The Niphal of כָּמַר (*kamar*) means “to grow warm, tender” (BDB 485 s.v. כָּמַר), as its use in a simile with the oven demonstrates (Lam 5:10). It is used several times to describe the arousal of the most tender affection (Gen 43:30; 1 Kgs 3:26; Hos 11:8; BDB 485 s.v. 1; HALOT 482 §34.1). Cf. NRSV “my compassion grows warm and tender.”

⁴³ **tn** The three imperfect verbs function as imperfects of capability, similar to the imperfects of capability in 11:8. See *IBHS* 564 §34.1a.

⁴⁴ **tn** When the verb יָרַד (*kharad*, “to tremble”) is used with prepositions of direction, it denotes “to go or come trembling” (BDB 353 s.v. יָרַד 4; e.g., Gen 42:28; 1 Sam 13:7; 16:4; 21:2; Hos 11:10, 11). Thus, the phrase יִקְרְאוּ...מִיַּבֵּשׁ (*yekherdu...miyyam*) means “to come trembling from the west.” Cf. NAB “shall come frightened from the west.”

11:11 They will return in fear and trembling¹
like birds from Egypt,
like doves from Assyria,
and I will settle them in their homes,”
declares the LORD.

God's Lawsuit against Israel: Breach of Covenant

11:12 (12:1)² Ephraim has surrounded me
with lies;
the house of Israel has surrounded me³
with deceit.
But Judah still roams about with⁴ God;
he remains faithful to the Holy One.
12:1 Ephraim continually feeds on the
wind;
he chases the east wind all day;
he multiplies lies and violence.
They make treaties⁵ with Assyria,
and send olive oil as tribute⁶ to Egypt.
12:2 The LORD also has a covenant law-
suit⁷ against Judah;

he will punish Jacob according to his
ways
and repay him according to his deeds.

Israel Must Return to the God of Jacob

12:3 In the womb he attacked his brother;
in his manly vigor he struggled⁸ with
God.
12:4 He struggled⁹ with an angel and pre-
vailed;
he wept and begged for his favor.
He found God¹⁰ at Bethel,¹¹
and there he spoke with him!¹²
12:5 As for the LORD God Almighty,
the LORD is the name by which he is re-
membered!¹³
12:6 But you must return¹⁴ to your God,
by maintaining love and justice,

¹ **tn** For the meaning of *הָרַד* (*harad*, “to tremble”) with prepositions of direction, see 11:10 above.

² **sn** Beginning with 11:12, the verse numbers through 12:14 in the English Bible differ by one from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (*BHS*), with 11:12 ET = 12:1 HT, 12:1 ET = 12:2 HT, etc., through 12:14 ET = 12:15 HT. From 13:1 to 13:16 the verse numbers in the English Bible and the Hebrew Bible are again the same.

³ **tn** The phrase “has surrounded me” is not repeated in the Hebrew text here, but is implied by the parallelism in the preceding line. It is supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons, smoothness, and readability.

⁴ **tn** The verb *רוּד* (*rud*, “to roam about freely”) is used in a concrete sense to refer to someone wandering restlessly and roaming back and forth (BDB 923 s.v. *רוּד*; Judg 11:37). Here, it is used figuratively, possibly with positive connotations, as indicated by the preposition *עִם* (“with”), to indicate accompaniment: “but Judah still goes about with God” (*HALOT* 1194 s.v. *רוּד*). Some English versions render it positively: “Judah still walks with God” (RSV, NRSV); “Judah is restive under God” (REB); “but Judah stands firm with God” (NJPS); “but Judah yet ruleth with God” (KJV, ASV). Other English versions adopt the negative connotation “to wander restlessly” and nuance *עִם* in an adversative sense (“against”): “Judah is still rebellious against God” (NAB), “Judah is unruly against God” (NIV), and “the people of Judah are still rebelling against me” (TEV).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “a treaty” (so NIV, NRSV); KJV, NASB “a covenant”; NAB “comes to terms.”

⁶ **tn** The phrase “as tribute” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for clarity. Cf. NCV “send a gift of olive oil.”

⁷ **tn** The noun *רִיב* (*riv*, “dispute”) is used in two contexts: (1) nonlegal contexts: (a) “dispute” between individuals (e.g., Gen 13:7; Isa 58:1; Jer 15:10) or (b) “brawl, quarrel” between people (e.g., Exod 17:7; Deut 25:1); and (2) legal contexts: (a) “lawsuit, legal process” (e.g., Exod 23:3-6; Deut 19:17; 21:5; Ezek 44:24; Ps 35:23), (b) “lawsuit, legal case” (e.g., Deut 1:12; 17:8; Prov 18:17; 25:9), and (c) God’s “lawsuit” on behalf of a person or against his own people (Hos 4:1; 12:3; Mic 6:2; *HALOT* 1225-26 s.v. *רִיב*). The term in Hosea refers to a covenant lawsuit in which Yahweh, the suzerain, lodges a legal case against his disobedient vassal, accusing Israel and Judah of breach of covenant which will elicit the covenant curses. Cf. NLT “is bringing a lawsuit.”

⁸ **tn** The verb *סָרַח* (*sarah*) means “to strive, contend” (*HALOT* 1354 s.v. *סָרַח*) or “persevere, persist” (BDB 975 s.v. *סָרַח*; see Gen 32:29). Almost all English versions render the verb here in terms of the former: NAB, NASB “contended”; NRSV “strove”; TEV, CEV “fought against.”

⁹ **tc** The MT vocalizes the consonantal text *וַיִּשָּׂר* (*vayyasar*, *vav* consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person masculine singular from *סָרַח*, *sur*, “to see”); however, parallelism with *סָרַח* (*sarah*, “he contended”) in 12:3 suggested that it be vocalized as *וַיִּשָּׂר* (*vav* consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person masculine singular from *סָרַח* [“to strive, contend”]). The latter is followed by almost all English versions here.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “him”; the referent (God) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **map** For location see Map4-G4; Map5-C1; Map6-E3; Map7-D1; Map8-G3.

¹² **tc** The Leningrad Codex and the Aleppo Codex both read 1st person common plural *עִמָּנוּ* (*immanu*, “with us”). The LXX and Peshitta both reflect an alternate Hebrew *Vorlage* of 3rd person masculine singular *עִמּוֹ* (*imo*, “with him”). The *BHS* editors suggest emending the MT in favor of the Greek and Syriac. The internal evidence of 12:4-5 favors the 3rd person masculine singular reading. It is likely that the 1st person common plural *עִמָּנוּ* reading arose due to a misunderstanding of the 3rd person masculine singular *עִמּוֹ* suffix on *יָצָאנוּ* (*yimtsa’enu*, “he found him”); Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular + 3rd person masculine singular suffix) which was probably misunderstood as the 1st person common plural suffix: “he found us.” Several English versions follow the LXX and Syriac: “there he spoke with him” (RSV, NAB, NEB, NIV, NJPS, TEV). Others follow the MT: “there he spoke with us” (KJV, NASB, CEV). The Hebrew University Old Testament Project, which tends to preserve the MT whenever possible, adopts the MT reading but gives it only a “C” rating. See D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:262-63.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “[is] his memorial name” (so ASV); TEV “the name by which he is to be worshipped.”

¹⁴ **tn** The verb *אָשׁוּב* (*ashuv*, Qal imperfect 2nd person masculine singular from *שׁוּב*, *shuv*, “to return”) functions as an imperfect of moral obligation, introducing the following imperatives (e.g., Gen 20:9; Exod 4:15). For this function of the imperfect, see *IBHS* 508-9 §31.4g.

and by waiting¹ for your God to return to you.²

The Lord Refutes Israel's False Claim of Innocence

12:7 The businessmen love to cheat;³ they use dishonest scales.⁴

12:8 Ephraim boasts,⁵ "I am very rich! I have become wealthy!⁶

In all that I have done to gain my wealth,⁷

no one can accuse me of any offense⁸ that is actually sinful."⁹

12:9 "I am the LORD your God¹⁰ who brought you¹¹ out of Egypt;

I will make you live in tents again as in the days of old.¹²

12:10 I spoke to the prophets;

I myself revealed many visions;¹³

I spoke in parables¹⁴ through¹⁵ the prophets."

¹ **tn** The verb **יָחַד** (*yāḥad*, *vav* + Piel imperative 2nd person masculine singular from **יָחַד**, *qavah*, "to wait for") means "to hope for, wait for, look eagerly for" (BDB 875 s.v. **יָחַד** 1; HALOT 1082 s.v. **יָחַד** 2.b). The Qal meaning refers to a general hope; the Piel meaning refers to hope directed toward an object, or hope inserted within a sequence of expectation and fulfillment. When the Piel is used in reference to a thing, it refers to waiting expectantly for something to occur (e.g., Gen 49:18; Isa 5:2, 4, 7; 59:9, 11; Jer 8:15; 13:16; 14:19; Ps 69:21; Job 3:9; 6:19; 11:20). When it is used in reference to God, it refers to the people of God waiting expectantly for God to do something or to fulfill his promise (e.g., Pss 25:5, 21; 27:14; 37:34; 40:2 HT [40:1 ET]; 52:11 HT [52:9 ET]; 130:5; Isa 8:17; 25:9; 26:8; 33:2; 51:5; 60:9; Hos 12:7). The personal object can be introduced by the preposition **לָ** (*lamed*, "for"; HALOT 1082 s.v. **יָחַד** 2.a) or **אֵל** (*el*, "for"; HALOT 1082 s.v. **יָחַד** 2.b; e.g., Pss 27:14; 37:34; Isa 51:5; Hos 12:7). The point seems to be that if Israel will repent and practice moral righteousness, she can look to God in confident expectation that he will intervene on her behalf by relenting from judgment and restoring the covenant blessings.

² **tn** The phrase "to return to you" does not appear in the Hebrew text but is implied; it is provided in the translation for clarity. This ellipsis fills out the implicit connotations of the verb **יָחַד** (*qavah*, "to wait for").

³ **tn** *Heb* "the merchant...loves to cheat." The Hebrew has singular forms (noun and verb) which are used generically to refer to all Israelite merchants and traders in general. The singular noun **כַּנְיָאן** (*kānʾān*, "a merchant; a trader"; BDB 488 s.v. **כַּנְיָאן**) is used in a generic sense to refer to the merchant class of Israel as a whole (e.g., Ezek 16:29; 17:4; Zeph 1:11).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "The merchant – in his hand are scales of deceit – loves to cheat." The present translation rearranges the Hebrew line division to produce a smoother English rendering.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "says" (so NAB).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "I have found wealth for myself." The verb **מָצָא** (*matsʾa*, "to find") is repeated in 12:8 to create a wordplay that is difficult to reproduce in translation. The Israelites have "found" (**מָצָא**) wealth for themselves (i.e., become wealthy; v. 8a) through dishonest business practices (v. 7). Nevertheless, they claim that no guilt can be "found" (**מָצָא**) in anything they have done in gaining their wealth (v. 8b).

⁷ **tc** The MT reads the 1st person common singular suffix on the noun **יָגִיעַ** (*yāgiʿay*, "my labors/gains"; masculine plural noun + 1st person common singular suffix). The LXX's οἱ πόνοι αὐτοῦ (*hoi ponoi autou*, "his labors") assumes a 3rd person masculine singular suffix on the noun **יָגִיעַ** (*yāgiʿav*, "his labors/gains"; masculine plural noun + 3rd person masculine singular suffix). The BHS editors suggest adopting the LXX reading. The textual decision is based upon whether or not this line continues the speech of Ephraim (1st person common singular suffix) or whether these are the words of the prophet (3rd person masculine singular suffix). See the following translator's note for the two rival lexical meanings which in turn lead to the textual options for the line as a whole.

tn *Heb* "In all my gains/labors." The noun **יָגִיעַ** (*yāgiʿa*) has a two-fold range of meanings: (1) "toil, labor" and (2) metonymical result of toil: "product, produce, gain, acquired property" (i.e., wealth gained by labor; BDB 388 s.v.; HALOT 385-86 s.v.). Normally, only one of the categories of meaning is present in any usage; however, it is possible that intentional semantic ambiguity is present in this usage because the context invokes both ideas: action + wealth.

⁸ **tn** The phrase **מָצָאתִי אֵין לִי** (*matsʾati ʾon li*, "I have found wealth for myself" = I have become wealthy) forms a wordplay with **לֹא מִצָּאתִי לִי עֵין** (*lo ʾyimtsʾu li ʾavon*, "they will not find guilt in me"). The repetition of **מָצָאתִי** (*matsʾa li*) is enhanced by the paronomasia between the similar sounding nouns **עֵין** (*on*, "guilt") and **אֵין** (*on*, "wealth"). The wordplay emphasizes that Israel's acquisition of wealth cannot be divorced from his guilt in dishonest business practices. Israel has difficulty in protesting his innocence that he is not guilty (**עֵין**) of the dishonest acquisition of wealth (**אֵין**).

⁹ **tc** The MT reads "[in] all my gains, they will not find guilt in me which would be sin." The LXX reflects a Hebrew *Vorlage* which would be translated "in all his labors, he cannot offset his guilt which is sin." Some translations follow the LXX: "but all his riches can never offset the guilt he has incurred" (RSV); "None of his gains shall atone for the guilt of his sins" (NEB); "All his gain shall not suffice him for the guilt of his sin" (NAB). Most follow the MT: "In all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin" (KJV); "In all my labors they will find in me no iniquity, which would be sin" (NASB); "With all my wealth they will not find in me any iniquity or sin" (NIV); "All my gains do not amount to an offense which is real guilt" (NJPS); "No one can accuse us [sic] of getting rich dishonestly" (TEV); "I earned it all on my own, without committing a sin" (CEV). See D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:262-63.

tn *Heb* "In all my gains/labors, no one can find in me any guilt which is sin."

¹⁰ **sn** The LORD answers Ephraim's self-assertion ("I am rich!") with the self-introduction formula ("I am the LORD your God!") which introduces judgment oracles and ethical instructions.

¹¹ **tn** Or "[Ever since you came] out of Egypt"; CEV "just as I have been since the time you were in Egypt."

¹² **tn** *Heb* "as in the days of meeting" (**כִּימֵי מוֹעֵד**, *kime moʿed*). This phrase might refer to "time of the festival" (e.g., Hos 2:13; 9:5; cf. NASB, NRSV, NLT) or the LORD's first "meeting" with Israel in the desert (cf. NAB, TEV, CEV). In his announcements about Israel's future, Hosea uses "as in the days of [...]" (**כִּימֵי**) or "as in the day of [...]" (**כִּי־יּוֹם**, *kī-yom*) to introduce analogies drawn from Israel's early history (e.g., Hos 2:5, 17; 9:9; 10:9).

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "I myself multiplied vision[s]"; cf. NASB "I gave numerous visions."

¹⁴ **tn** There is debate whether **אֲדַמְמֶה** (*ʾadammeḥ*, Piel imperfect 1st person common singular) is derived from **דָּמָה** (*damah*, "similitude, parable") or **דָּמָה** ("oracle of doom"). The lexicons favor the former (BDB 198 s.v. **דָּמָה** 1; HALOT 225-26 s.v. **דָּמָה**). Most translators favor "parables" (cf. KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NJPS), but a few opt for "oracles of doom" (cf. NRSV, TEV, CEV).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "by the hand of"; KJV, ASV "by the ministry of."

12:11 Is there idolatry¹ in Gilead?²
 Certainly its inhabitants³ will come to
 nothing!⁴
 Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal?
 Surely their altars will be like stones
 heaped up on a plowed field!

*Jacob in Aram, Israel in Egypt, and Ephraim in
 Trouble*

12:12 Jacob fled to the country of Aram,
 then Israel worked⁵ to acquire a wife;
 he tended sheep to pay for her.
 12:13 The LORD brought Israel out of
 Egypt by a prophet,
 and due to a prophet⁶ Israel⁷ was pre-
 served alive.⁸
 12:14 But Ephraim bitterly⁹ provoked him
 to anger;
 so he will hold him accountable for the
 blood he has shed,¹⁰
 his Lord¹¹ will repay him for the con-
 tempt he has shown.¹²

¹ **tn** The noun אָוֶן (*aven*) has a broad range of meanings which includes: (1) “wickedness, sin, injustice” (2) “deception, nothingness,” and (3) “idolatry, idolatrous cult” (HALOT 22 s.v. אָוֶן; BDB 19 s.v. אָוֶן). While any of these meanings would fit the present context, the second-half of the verse refers to cultic sins, suggesting that Hosea is denouncing Gilead for its idolatry. Cf. NLT “Gilead is filled with sinners who worship idols.”

² **tn** The introductory deictic particle אִם (*im*) functions as an interrogative and introduces an interrogative clause: “Is there...?” (see HALOT 60 s.v. אִם 5; BDB 50 s.v. אִם 2). The LXX assumed that אִם was being used in its more common function as a conditional particle: “If there....”

³ **tn** Heb “they”; the referent (the inhabitants of Gilead) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁴ **tn** The noun שָׁוְיָא (*shav’*, “emptiness, nothing”), which describes the imminent judgment of the people of Gilead, creates a wordplay in Hebrew with the noun אָוֶן (*aven*, “nothingness” = idolatry). Because Gilead worshiped “nothingness” (idols), it would become “nothing” (i.e., be destroyed).

⁵ **tn** Heb “served” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV); NLT “earned a wife.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “by a prophet” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

⁷ **tn** Heb “he”; the referent (Israel) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁸ **tn** Heb “was protected”; NASB “was kept.” The verb שָׁמַר (*shamar*, “to watch, guard, keep, protect”) is repeated in 12:13-14 HT (12:12-13 ET). This repetition creates parallels between Jacob’s sojourn in Aram and Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness. Jacob “tended = kept” (שָׁמַר) sheep in Aram, and Israel was “preserved = kept” (נִשְׁמַר, *nishmar*) by Moses in the wilderness.

⁹ **tn** The noun תַּמְרוּרִים (*tamurim*, “bitter things”) functions as an adverbial accusative of manner, modifying the finite verb: “He bitterly provoked Him to anger” (GKC 375 §118.g). The plural form of the noun functions as a plural of intensity: “very bitterly.” For the adverbial function of the accusative, see IBHS 172-73 §10.2.2e.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “He will leave his blood upon him”; NIV “will leave upon him the guilt of his bloodshed.”

¹¹ **tn** The Hebrew term translated “Lord” here is אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*).

¹² **tn** Heb “for his contempt” (so NIV); NRSV “for his insults”; NAB “for his outrage.”

*Baal Worshipers and Calf Worshipers to be
 Destroyed*

13:1 When Ephraim¹³ spoke,¹⁴ there was
 terror;¹⁵
 he was exalted¹⁶ in Israel,
 but he became guilty by worshiping Baal
 and died.
 13:2 Even now they persist in sin!¹⁷
 They make metal images for themselves,
 idols that they skillfully fashion¹⁸ from
 their own silver;
 all of them are nothing but the work of
 craftsmen!
 There is a saying about them:¹⁹

¹³ **sn** In Hosea the name “Ephraim” does not refer to the tribe, but to the region of Mount Ephraim where the royal residence of Samaria was located. It functions as a synecdoche of location (Mount Ephraim) for its inhabitants (the king of Samaria; e.g., 5:13; 8:8, 10).

¹⁴ **tn** The rulers of Ephraim (i.e., Samaria) issued many political decisions in the 8th century B.C. which brought “terror” to the other regions of the Northern Kingdom, as well as to Judah: “hearts shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind” (Isa 7:2; 2 Kgs 16:5).

¹⁵ **tn** The noun רִתַּת (*r’etat*, “terror, trembling”) appears only here in OT (BDB 958 s.v. רִתַּת; HALOT 1300-1301 s.v. רִתַּת). However, it is attested in 1QH 4:33 where it means “trembling” and is used as a synonym with רָעַד (*ra’ad*, “quaking”). It also appears in Mishnaic Hebrew, meaning “trembling” (G. Dalman, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch*, 406, s.v. רִתַּת). This is the meaning reflected in the Greek recensions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, as well as Jerome’s Latin Vulgate.

¹⁶ **tc** The MT vocalizes the consonantal text נִשְׂאָה (*nasa’*, “he exalted”); Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular) which is syntactically awkward. The LXX and Syriac reflect a vocalization tradition of נִישָׂא (*nisa’*, “he was exalted”; Niphal perfect 3rd person masculine singular). The BHS editors suggest that this revocalization should be adopted, and it has been followed by NAB, NIV, NRSV.

¹⁷ **tn** The phrase יוֹסִיפוּ לַחֲטֹאֵי (*yosif’u lakhato’*, “they add to sin”) is an idiom meaning either (1) “they sin more and more” or (2) “they continue to sin” (see BDB 415 s.v. יוֹסִיפ; 2.a; HALOT 418 s.v. יוֹסִיפ 3.b). The English versions are divided: (1) “they sin more and more” (KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV) and (2) “they go on sinning” (NPS), “they continue to sin” (NAB), “they (+ still TEV, NCV) keep on sinning” (NRSV, NLT).

¹⁸ **tn** The term כִּתְּבוּנָם (*kivunam*, “according to their skill”; preposition כִּ + feminine singular noun תְּבוּנָה, *t’vunah* + 3rd person masculine plural suffix) is an abbreviated form of כִּתְּבוּתָם (*kivunatam*; GKC 255-56 §91.e). תְּבוּנָה means “understanding, faculty, skill” (BDB 108 s.v. תְּבוּנָה 1). It refers to a builder skillfully constructing a house (Prov 24:3), God skillfully fashioning creation (Ps 136:5; Prov 3:19), and a craftsman skillfully making an idol (Hos 13:2).

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “They say about them.” Another possible rendering for the line is: “It is said of them – those men who sacrifice, ‘They kiss calves!’” The phrase וְהָיָה אֲדָמָה (*zovkhe’ adam*, “those men who sacrifice”) functions either (1) as the subject of the verb יִקְשְׁוּ (*yikshaqu*, “they kiss”) in the quotation in the direct discourse: “It is said of them, ‘Those men who sacrifice kiss calves!’” or (2) in apposition to the indirect object 3rd person masculine plural suffix לָהֶם (*lahem*, “about them”): “It is said of them, that is, those men who sacrifice....”

“Those who sacrifice¹ to the calf idol are calf kissers!”²

13:3 Therefore they will disappear like³ the morning mist,⁴ like early morning dew that evaporates,⁵ like chaff that is blown away⁶ from a threshing floor, like smoke that disappears through an open window.

Well-Fed Israel Will Be Fed to Wild Animals

13:4 But I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. Therefore, you must not acknowledge any God but me; except me there is no Savior.

13:5 I cared⁷ for you in the wilderness,

in the dry desert where no water was.⁸
13:6 When they were fed,⁹ they became satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud;¹⁰ as a result, they forgot me!

13:7 So¹¹ I will pounce on them like a lion;¹² like a leopard I will lurk by the path.
13:8 I will attack them like a bear robbed of her cubs – I will rip open their chests. I will devour them there like a lion – like a wild animal would tear them apart.

Israel's King Unable to Deliver the Nation

13:9 I will destroy you,¹³ O Israel! Who¹⁴ is there to help you?

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Those among men who offer sacrifices.” The genitive construct זְבוּחֵי אָדָם (*zovkhe' adam*, “the sacrificers of men”) is misunderstood by NIV as an objective genitive phrase: “they offer human sacrifice.” Such a classification is questionable: (1) Nowhere else in the book does Hosea accuse Israel of human sacrifice, and (2) archaeological evidence does not provide any evidence of human sacrifice in the Northern Kingdom during Iron Age I (1200-722 B.C.). This phrase should be classified as a genitive of species: the genitive represents the whole class or kind of a species (men) and the construct represents a part of the whole or subspecies within the whole (those who sacrifice): “those among men who offer sacrifice” (those who offer sacrifices). The expression “a fool of men” in Prov 15:20 provides a similar example: the genitive represents the whole class/species (men) and the construct represents a part of the whole/subspecies (a fool): “a foolish man.” This is the tactic adopted by most English versions: “the men that sacrifice” (KJV), “the men who sacrifice” (NASB), “they appoint men to sacrifice [to them]” (NJPS).

² **tn** *Heb* “They kiss calves!” The verb יִשָּׁקוּ (*yishaqun*) may be parsed as an imperfect (“they kiss [calves]”) or jussive (“let them kiss [calves]!”). Paragogic *nun* endings (וּ יִשָּׁקוּ) are attached to imperfects to connote rhetorical emphasis. It is used either (1) to mark out an action that is contrary to normal practice and deviates from normal expectations (those who worship the calf idol are, in effect, kissing calves!), or (2) to express strong emotion (in this case disgust) at the action of the calf idolaters (they kiss calves!). For function of paragogic *nun*, see *IBHS* 516-17 §31.7.1.

³ **tn** *Heb* “they will be like” (so NASB, NIV).

⁴ **tn** The phrase כַּעֲנַן בֹּקֵר (*ke'an-an-boqer*, “like a cloud of the morning”) occurs also in Hos 6:4 in a similar simile. The Hebrew poets and prophets refer to morning clouds as a simile for transitoriness (Job 7:9; Isa 44:22; Hos 6:4; 13:3; *HALOT* 858 s.v. עָנָן 1.b; BDB 778 s.v. עָנָן 1.c).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “like the early rising dew that goes away”; TEV “like the dew that vanishes early in the day.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “storm-driven away”; KJV, ASV “driven with the whirlwind out.” The verb יָבֵס (*yabes*, Poel imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from יָבַס, *sa'ar*, “to storm”) often refers to the intense action of strong, raging storm winds (e.g., Jonah 1:11, 13). The related nouns refer to “heavy gale,” “storm wind,” and “high wind” (BDB 704 s.v. יָבַס; *HALOT* 762 s.v. יָבַס). The verb is used figuratively to describe the intensity of God’s destruction of the wicked whom he will “blow away” (Isa 54:11; Hos 13:3; Hab 3:14; Zech 7:14; BDB 704 s.v.; *HALOT* 762 s.v.).

⁷ **tc** The MT reads יִדְעֶיךָ (*da'tikha*, Qal perfect 1st person common singular + 2nd person masculine singular suffix from יָדַע, *yada'*, “to know”), followed by KJV, ASV (“I did know thee”). The LXX and Syriac reflect an alternate textual tradition of דְעִיךָ (*de'ikha*, Qal perfect 1st person common singular + 2nd person masculine singular suffix from יָדַע, *ra'ah*, “to feed”), which is followed by most recent English versions (e.g.,

NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “land of intense drought” or “intensely thirsty land.” The noun תְּלֻאֲבוֹת (*tal'uvot*) occurs in the OT only here. It probably means “drought” (BDB 520 s.v. תְּלֻאֲבוֹת). The related Arabic verb means “to be thirsty” and the related Arabic noun means “a stony tract of land.” The plural form (singular = תְּלֻאֲבוֹה, *tal'uvah*) is a plural of intensity: “a [land] of intense drought.” The term functions as an attributive genitive, modifying the construct אֶרֶץ (*erets*, “land”). The phrase is variously rendered: “land of (+ great KJV) drought” (RSV, NASB), “thirsty land” (NJPS), “thirsty desert” (CEV), “dry, desert land” (TEV), and the metonymical (effect for cause) “land of burning heat” (NIV).

⁹ **tc** The MT reads כְּמִרְעִיתָם (*ke-mar'itam*, “according to their pasturage”; preposition כַּ (*kaf*) + noun מִרְעִיתָם, *mar'it*, “pasture” + 3rd person masculine plural suffix). Text-critics propose: (1) כְּמִרְעִיתָם (*ke'mo'el'itim*, “as I pastured them”; preposition כַּ (*kaf*) + Qal perfect 1st person common singular from רָעָה, *ra'ah*, “to pasture, feed” + 3rd person masculine plural suffix) and (2) כְּרִעִיתָם (“when they had pastured”; preposition כַּ + Qal perfect 3rd person masculine plural from רָעָה). Some English versions follow the MT: “according to their pasture” (KJV), “as they had their pasture” (NASB), “when you entered the good land” (TEV). Others adopt the first emendation: “when I fed them” (NIV, NRSV), “I fed you [sic = them]” (CEV). Still others follow the second emendation: “but when they had fed to the full” (RSV), “when they grazed” (NJPS).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “their heart became exalted”; KJV, ASV “was exalted.”

¹¹ **tn** The *vav* consecutive + preterite form וָאֵחִי (*va'ehi*) introduces a consequential or result clause; cf. NAB “Therefore”; NCV “That is why.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “So I will be like a lion to them” (so NASB); NIV “I will come upon them like a lion.”

¹³ **tc** The MT reads שִׁחֶתְךָ (*shikhetkha*, “he destroyed you”; Piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular from שָׁחַת, *shakhat*, “to destroy” + 2nd person masculine singular suffix). The *BHS* editors suggest שִׁחֶתֶיךָ (“I will destroy you”; Piel perfect 1st person common singular + 2nd person masculine singular suffix). Contextually, this fits: If the LORD is intent on destroying Israel, there is no one who will be able to rescue her from him. This reading is also followed by NCV, NRSV, TEV.

¹⁴ **tc** The MT reads כִּי־בִי בְעֶזְרֶכָה (*ki-vi ve'ezrekha*, “but in me is your help”); cf. KJV, NIV, NLT. The LXX and Syriac reflect an underlying Hebrew text of כִּי־בִי בְעֶזְרֶכָה (*ki-mi ve'ezrekha*, “For who will help you?”). The interrogative כִּי (“Who?”) harmonizes well with the interrogatives in 13:9-10 and should be adopted, as the *BHS* editors suggest; the reading is also followed by NAB, NCV, NRSV, TEV.

13:10 Where¹ then is your king,
that he may save you in all your cities?
Where are² your rulers for whom you
asked, saying,
“Give me a king and princes”?³
13:11 I granted³ you a king in my anger,
and I will take him away in my wrath!

Israel's Punishment Will Not Be Withheld Much Longer

13:12 The punishment⁴ of Ephraim has
been decreed,⁵
his punishment is being stored up for the
future.
13:13 The labor pains of a woman will
overtake him,
but the baby will lack wisdom;
when the time arrives,
he will not come out of the womb!

The Lord Will Not Relent from the Threatened Judgment

13:14 Will I deliver them from the power
of Sheol? No, I will not!⁶

¹ **tc** The MT reads the enigmatic אֲחִי (‘*ehi*, “I want to be [your king]”); apocopated Qal imperfect 1st person common singular from הָיָה, *hayah*, “to be” which makes little sense and conflicts with the 3rd person masculine singular form in the dependent clause: “that he might save you” (וַיִּשְׁעֶנְךָ, *v’yoshi’akha*). All the versions (Greek, Syriac, Vulgate) read the interrogative particle אֵיזָה (‘*ayeh*, “where?”) which the BHS editors endorse. The textual corruption was caused by metathesis of the י (*yod*) and ה (*hey*). Few English versions follow the MT: “I will be thy/your king” (KJV, NKJV). Most recent English versions follow the ancient versions in reading “Where is your king?” (ASV, RSV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NJPS, CEV, NLT).

² **tn** The repetition of the phrase “Where are...?” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism in the preceding lines. It is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and for stylistic reasons.

³ **tn** The prefix-conjugation verb אֶתֵּן (‘*eten*, “I gave”) refers to past-time action, specifying a definite past event (the enthronement of Saul); therefore, this should be classified as a preterite. While imperfects are occasionally used in reference to past-time events, they depict repeated action in the past. See *IBHS* 502-4 §31.2 and 510-14 §31.6.

⁴ **tn** The noun עֲוֹן (‘*avon*) has a three-fold range of meanings: (1) “iniquity,” so KJV, NASB, NRSV; (2) “guilt,” so NAB, NIV; and (3) “punishment” (BDB 730 s.v. עֲוֹן). The oracle of 13:12-13 announces that Israel’s punishment, though momentarily withheld, will suddenly come upon her like labor pains that will kill her.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “has been bound.” צָרָה (‘*tsarah*, “to bind”) refers elsewhere to the action of scribes binding a document into a sealed scroll of safekeeping (Isa 8:16; HALOT 1058 s.v. צָרָה 1; BDB 864 s.v. צָרָה 1). Here it figuratively depicts the record of Israel’s sins being written down and permanently bound in a sealed scroll for safekeeping (cf. NCV, TEV “are on record”). The guilt of Israel’s sin will be retained.

⁶ **tn** The translation of the first two lines of this verse reflects the interpretation adopted. There are three interpretive options to v. 14: (1) In spite of Israel’s sins, the LORD will redeem them from the threat of death and destruction (e.g., 11:8). However, against this view, the last line of 13:14 probably means that the LORD will not show compassion to Israel. (2) The LORD announces the triumphant victory over death through resurrection (cf. KJV, ASV, NIV). However, although Paul uses the wording of Hosea 13:14 as an illustration of victory over death, the context of Hosea’s message is the imminent judgment in 723-722 B.C. (3) The first two lines of 13:14 are rhetorical questions without explicit interrogative

Will I redeem them from death? No, I
will not!
O Death, bring on your plagues!⁷
O Sheol, bring on your destruction!⁸
My eyes will not show any compassion!⁹

The Capital of the Northern Empire Will Be Destroyed

13:15 Even though he flourishes like a
reed plant,¹⁰
a scorching east wind will come,
a wind from the LORD rising up from the
desert.
As a result, his spring will dry up;¹¹

markers, implying negative answers: “I will not rescue them!” (cf. NAB, NASB, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT). The next two lines in 13:14 are words of encouragement to Death and Sheol to destroy Israel. The final line announces that the LORD will not show compassion on Israel; he will not spare her.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Where, O Death, are your plagues?” (so NIV).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Where, O Sheol, is your destruction?” (NRSV similar).

⁹ **tn** The two rhetorical questions in 13:14b function as words of encouragement, inviting personified Death and Sheol to draw near like foreign invading armies to attack and kill Israel (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Compassion will be hidden from my eyes” (NRSV similar; NASB “from my sight”).

¹¹ **tc** The MT reads בֶּן אֲחִים יַפְרִיא (‘*ben ’akhim yafri*, “he flourishes [as] a son of brothers”), which is awkward syntactically and enigmatic contextually. The Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions reflect a *Vorlage* of בֶּן אֲחִים יַפְרִיד (‘*ben ’akhim yafriḏ*, “he causes division between brothers”). The BHS editors suggest the MT confused the common term אָח (‘*akh*, “brother”) for the rarer term אָרוּ (‘*akhu*, “marsh plant, reed plant” [Job 8:11] and “reed bed” [Gen 41:2, 18; HALOT 31 s.v. אָרוּ]). This is an Egyptian loanword which is also attested in Ugaritic and Old Aramaic. The original text probably read either אָרוּ כַפְרִיא (‘*k’akhru kafri*, “he flourishes like a reed plant”); comparative כַּ, *kaf*, + noun אָרוּ, “reed” followed by Hiphil participle masculine singular from אָרוּ, *parah*, “to flourish” or אָרוּ כַפְרִיא (‘*ben ’akhu kafri*, “he flourishes among the reeds”); preposition בֵּין, *ben*, “between” followed by masculine singular noun אָרוּ “reed” followed by Hiphil participle masculine singular from אָרוּ (‘*parah*). The confusion over אָרוּ (“reed plant”) probably led to secondary scribal errors: (1) faulty word-division of אָרוּ כַּפְרִיא to אָרוּ כַּפְרִיא, and (2) secondary orthographic confusion of י (*yod*) and ו (*vav*) between אָרוּים and resultant אָרוּים. For discussion, see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 5:268-69. Several English versions retain the MT: “even though he thrives among his brothers” (NIV), “Though he be fruitful among his brethren” (KJV), “No matter how much you prosper more than the other tribes” (CEV), “Ephraim was the most fruitful of all his brothers (NLT). Others adopt one of the two emendations: (1) “though he flourishes among the reeds” (NEB, NASB, NJPS), and (2) “even though he flourishes like weeds” (TEV), “though he may flourish as the reed plant” (RSV).

tn Or “among the reed plants” (cf. NEB, NASB, NJPS).

¹¹ **tc** The MT אָרוּשׁ (‘*ayevosh*, “will be ashamed”); *vav* + Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from אָרוּשׁ, *bosh*, “to be ashamed”) does not fit the context. The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate reflect a *Vorlage* אָרוּשׁ יִבְשׁוּ (‘*yovish*, “will dry up”); *vav* + Hiphil imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from אָרוּשׁ, *yavash*, “to be dry”; HALOT 384 s.v. אָרוּשׁ 1. This fits well with the parallel אָרוּשׁ יִבְשׁוּ (‘*yevkherav*, “will become dry”); *vav* + Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from אָרוּשׁ, *kharav*, “to be dry”). See Isa 42:15; 44:27; Jer 51:36. The variant read by the ancient versions is followed by almost all modern English versions (as well as KJV, ASV).

his well will become dry.
That wind¹ will spoil all his delightful
foods
in the containers in his storehouse.

13:16 (14:1)² Samaria will be held guilty,³
because she rebelled against her God.
They will fall by the sword,
their infants will be dashed to the
ground –
their⁴ pregnant women will be ripped
open.

Prophetic Call to Genuine Repentance

14:1 Return, O Israel, to the LORD your
God,
for your sin has been your downfall!⁵
14:2 Return to the LORD and repent!⁶
Say to him: “Completely⁷ forgive our
iniquity;
accept⁸ our penitential prayer,⁹
that we may offer the praise of our lips as
sacrificial bulls.¹⁰

¹ **tn** The term “wind” is not repeated in the Hebrew text at this point but is implied; it is supplied in the translation for clarity.

² **sn** Beginning with **13:16**, the verse numbers through **14:9** in the English Bible differ by one from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with **13:16** ET = **14:1** HT, **14:1** ET = **14:2** HT, etc., through **14:9** ET = **14:10** HT. Thus ch. 14 in the Hebrew Bible has 10 verses.

³ **tn** Or “must bear its guilt” (NIV similar); NLT “must bear the consequences of their guilt”; CEV “will be punished.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “his.” This is a collective singular, as recognized by almost all English versions.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “For you have stumbled in your iniquity”; NASB, NRSV “because of your iniquity.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Take words with you and return to the Lord” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV).

⁷ **tn** The word order כְּלִי תִשָּׂאֵן (kol-tisa' 'avon) is syntactically awkward. The BHS editors suggest rearranging the word order: תִּשָּׂאֵן כְּלִי (‘‘Forgive all [our] iniquity!’’). However, Gesenius suggests that כָּל (“all”) does not function as the construct in the genitive phrase כְּלִי תִשָּׂאֵן (“all [our] iniquity”); it functions adverbially modifying the verb תִּשָּׂאֵן (“Completely forgive!”; see GKC 415 §128.e).

⁸ **sn** The repetition of the root לָקַח (laqakh) creates a striking wordplay in 14:2. If Israel will bring (לָקַח) its confession to God, he will accept (לָקַח) repentant Israel and completely forgive its sin.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “and accept [our] speech.” The word טוב (tov) is often confused with the common homonymic root טוב (tov, “good”; BDB 373 s.v. טוב). However, this is probably IV טוב (tov, “word, speech”; HALOT 372 s.v. IV טוב), a hapax legomenon that is related to the verb טָבַח (“to speak”; HALOT 367 s.v. טָבַח) and the noun טִבְחָה (tibbah, “rumor”; HALOT 367 s.v. טִבְחָה). The term טוב (“word; speech”) refers to the repentant prayer mentioned in 14:1-3. Most translations relate it to טוב and treat it as (1) accusative direct object: “accept that which is good” (RSV, NJPS), “Accept our good sacrifices” (CEV), or (2) adverbial accusative of manner: “receive [us] graciously” (KJV, NASB, NIV). Note TEV, however, which follows the suggestion made here: “accept our prayer.”

¹⁰ **tc** The MT reads פָּרִים (farim, “bulls”), but the LXX reflects פְּרִי (puri, “fruit”), a reading followed by NASB, NIV, NRSV: “that we may offer the fruit of [our] lips [as sacrifices to you].” Although the Greek expression in Heb 13:15 (καρπὸν ἁρπῶν, harpon xeileōn, “the fruit of lips”) reflects this LXX phrase, the MT makes good sense as it stands; NT usage of the LXX should not be considered decisive in resolving OT textual problems. The noun פָּרִים (parim, “bulls”) functions as an ad-

14:3 Assyria cannot save us;
we will not ride warhorses.
We will never again say, ‘Our gods’
to what our own hands have made.
For only you will show compassion to
Orphan Israel!’¹¹

Divine Promise to Relent from Judgment and to Restore Blessings

14:4 “I will heal their waywardness¹²
and love them freely,¹³
for my anger will turn¹⁴ away from them.

14:5 I will be like the dew to Israel;
he will blossom like a lily,
he will send down his roots like a cedar
of¹⁵ Lebanon.

14:6 His young shoots will grow;
his splendor will be like an olive tree,
his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

14:7 People will reside again¹⁶ in his
shade;
they will plant and harvest grain in abun-
dance.¹⁷

They will blossom like a vine,
and his fame will be like the wine from
Lebanon.

verbial accusative of state.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “For the orphan is shown compassion by you.” The present translation takes “orphan” as a figurative reference to Israel, which is specified in the translation for clarity.

¹² **sn** The noun מִשְׁוֹתָהּ (mishvatah, “waywardness”; cf. KJV “backsliding”) is from the same root as שׁוּבָה (shuvah, “return!”) in 14:1[2]. This repetition of שׁוּב (shuv) creates a wordplay which emphasizes reciprocity: if Israel will return (שׁוּבָה, shuvah) to the Lord, he will cure her of the tendency to turn away (מִשְׁוֹתָהּ) from him.

¹³ **tn** The noun נִדְבָהּ (nidavah, “voluntariness; free-will offering”) is an adverbial accusative of manner: “freely, voluntarily” (BDB 621 s.v. נִדְבָהּ 1). Cf. CEV “without limit”; TEV “with all my heart”; NLT “my love will know no bounds.”

¹⁴ **sn** The verb שָׁב, shav, “will turn” (Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from שׁוּב, shuv, “to turn”) continues the wordplay on שׁוּב in 14:1-4[2-5]. If Israel will “return” (שׁוּב) to the Lord, he will heal Israel’s tendency to “turn away” (מִשְׁוֹתָהּ, mishvatah) and “turn” (שָׁב) from his anger.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “like Lebanon” (so KJV; also in the following verse). The phrase “a cedar of” does not appear in the Hebrew text; it is supplied in translation for clarity. Cf. TEV “the trees of Lebanon”; NRSV “the forests of Lebanon.”

¹⁶ **tn** Hosea uses the similar-sounding terms יָשׁוּבוּ יֹשְׁבֵי (yashuvu yoshve, “the dwellers will return”) to create a wordplay between the roots שׁוּב (shuv, “to return”) and יָשָׁב (yashav, “to dwell; to reside”).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “they will cause the grain to live” or “they will revive the grain.” Some English versions treat this as a comparison: “they shall revive as the corn” (KJV); “will flourish like the grain” (NIV).

14:8 O Ephraim, I do not want to have
 anything to do¹ with idols anymore!
 I will answer him and care for him.
 I am like² a luxuriant cypress tree;³
 your fruitfulness comes from me!⁴

Concluding Exhortation

14:9 Who is wise?
 Let him discern⁵ these things!
 Who is discerning?
 Let him understand them!
 For the ways of the LORD are right;
 the godly walk in them,
 but in them the rebellious stumble.

¹ **tn** The Hebrew expression מְדַלֵּי עֵדָה (*mah-li 'od*) is a formula of repudiation/emphatic denial that God has anything in common with idols: "I want to have nothing to do with [...] any more!" Cf., e.g., Judg 11:12; 2 Sam 16:10; 19:23; 1 Kgs 17:18; 2 Kgs 3:13; 2 Chr 35:21; Jer 2:18; Ps 50:16; BDB 553 s.v. מְדַלֵּי 1.d.(c).

² **tn** The term "like" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for clarity, as in the majority of English versions (including KJV).

³ **tn** Cf. KJV "a green fir tree"; NIV, NCV "a green pine tree"; NRSV "an evergreen cypress."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "your fruit is found in me"; NRSV "your faithfulness comes from me."

⁵ **tn** The shortened form of the prefix-conjugation verb יָבֵן (יָבֵן *yaven*) indicates that it is a jussive rather than an imperfect. When a jussive comes from a superior to an inferior, it may connote exhortation and instruction or advice and counsel. For the functions of the jussive, see *IBHS* 568-70 §34.3.