

CONCISE NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

HOSEA

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Moretto da Brescia, c. 1550

HOSEA 1

1 THE word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

1:1. HOSEA (ho-se'a; salvation), was the son of Beeri, and the first of the Minor Prophets. He ministered (760-687 BC) to the kingdom of Israel during the days of Amos and Isaiah while Jeroboam II was on the throne and Israel enjoyed prosperity (2 Kings 14:23-18:37).

1:1. BEERI (be-e'-ri; of a fountain or well), was the father of the prophet Hosea who was born prior to 748 BC (Hos. 1:1).

1:1. UZZIAH (uz-zi'-ah; strength of Jehovah), the tenth king of Judah, was a good king. He became king upon the assassination of his father (c. 767 BC; 2 Kings 14:18-21). Uzziah was probably co-regent from c. 791 BC when his father was imprisoned (2 Kings 14:13; 2 Chronicles 25:23). He was buried with his fathers but not in the royal sepulchers (2 Chronicles 26:23).

1:1. JOTHAM (jo'-tham; Jehovah is perfect), the 11th king of Judah (2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 26:21-23), ruled as co-regent with his father after Uzziah contracted leprosy. His 18-year reign was one of righteousness though the people continued to practice idolatry.

1:1. AHAZ (a'-haz; he has sustained; possessor), was the twelfth king of Judah ruling from 735 to 715 BC. He was the son of Jotham (2 Kings 18:1).

1:1. HEZEKIAH (hez-e-ki'-ah; Jehovah is strength), was the thirteenth king of Judah. When faced with the hostile foreign army of Assyria, Hezekiah made extensive preparations for war. He refortified Jerusalem, manufactured weapons for his army, and reorganized his fighting forces under capable leaders.

1:1. JEROBOAM II (jer-o-bo-am; the people contend; the people become numerous), was the son of Joash and the 14th king of Israel. He was able to restore the territory of Israel from Lebanon to the Dead Sea (2 Kings 13:4; 14:25, 27; 14:28; Amos 1:3-5; 2 Kings 14:25-28).

1:1. JOASH (jo'-ash; Jehovah is strong; Jehovah has come), the 13th king of Israel is also called Jehoash (2 Kings 13:10, 25; 14:8-17). He reigned in Samaria for 16 years (2 Kings 13:9-10), from about 798 B. C. to 782/81 BC.

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

1:2. WIFE OF WHOERDOM.

Four Wives of Whoredom

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| • Gomer | Hosea 1:2-3 |
| • Tamar, daughter-in-law of Judah | Genesis 38:24 |
| • Rahab of Jericho | Joshua 2:1 |
| • Jezebel, the wife of Ahab | 2 Kings 9:22 |

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

1:3. GOMER (go'mer; consummation), was a prostitute who became the wife of the prophet

1:3. DIBLAIM (dib'-la-im; cluster of figs), was the father of Gomer, the wife of Hosea c. BC 750 (Hos. 1:3).

4 And the LORD said unto him, **Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.**

1:4. JEZREEL (jez'-re-el; God sows), was the eldest son of the prophet Hosea (Hos. 1:4,5). He received his name because of the great killing predicted by his father, c. 748 BC.

1:4. I WILL AVENGE THE BLOOD OF JEZREEL (1:4). Jezreel was a royal residence in the great plain of Jezreel at the head of the valley which bears the same name. The city was associated with the murder of Naboth and his sons (1 Kings 21) and the punishment of Ahab and his family by Jehu (2 Kings 9:21-37; 10:11).

1:4. HOUSE OF JEHU. The overthrow of the house of Jehu occurred after the death of Jeroboam in the thirty ninth year in the reign of Uzziah king of Israel (2 Kings 15:10,13). According to prophecy (1 Kings 21:21-24) slaughtered Jezebel and all the house of Ahab in Jezreel (2 Kings 10).

1:4. JEHU (je'-hu; Jehovah is He), was a military general who was able to destroy the house of Ahab and make himself king of Israel through a bloodbath. He killed Jehoram, the king of Judah, the nephew of Jehoram, Ahaziah, the survivors of Ahab's family including Jezebel, and then executed the worshippers of Baal. He was a ruthless personality. Under his administration, Jehu paid tribute to Shalmanezere III of Assyria. Later, Syria was able to conquer large areas of territory from Israel. Despite having bloody and brutal hands, Jehu was respected as a capable leader (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 9, 10, 12-15; 2 Chronicles 22; 25:17).

5 **And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.**

break the bow (1:5). Jehu did many memorable things in his life. His greatest feats were accomplished with his bow (2 Kings 9:24).

VALLEY OF JEZREEL. There were two places called Jezreel. The one belonging to Judah (Josh. 15:56) and the other belonging to Israel (Josh. 17:16; 19:18). Jezreel was a fruitful valley 10 miles long, and by it there was a famous city built, which, in Ahab's time, was the metropolis of the kingdom in which was a tower that overlooked Galilee and Jordan. This Jezreel of Israel was well fortified.

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

LO-RUHAMA (lo-ru-ha'-mah; not pitied, not favored, no mercy), was the name given by God to the daughter of the prophet Hosea to show that the Lord would no longer have mercy on rebellious Israel (Hos. 1:6).

7 **But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.**

HOUSE OF JUDAH (1:7). This verse provides a parenthesis of great importance. God's mercy was not shut off. People could escape to Judah. Later, in the days of Hezekiah, many did (2 Chronicles 30:1-12).

8 Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

9 Then said God, **Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.**

LO-AMMI (la-am'-mi; not my people), was the name of the second son of Hosea by his wife Gomer. His name symbolized God's rejection of Israel (Hos. 1:9-10).

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

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

HOSEA 2

1 SAY ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

AMMI (am'-mi; my people), was a figurative given by the prophet Hosea to his second son by his wife Gomer who was the daughter of Diblaim. The name was used for the people of Israel in contrast to Lo-ammi which meant "not my people" (Hos. 2:1).

RUHAMAH (ru-ha'-mah; she has received mercy), was a figurative title applied to the daughter of the prophet of God named Hosea. The word signifies that God would restore Israel to His favor if the people would only repent.

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

BETWEEN HER BREASTS (2:2). The implication is that Israel's sins were precious to her and had to be put away (cf. Song of Sol. 1:13).

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

4 And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms.

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

MOTHER. The word is used here to speak of the community of Israel.

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

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

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

9 Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.

The Gifts of Lovers	The Gifts of God
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Hosea 2:5	Hosea 2:8-9
bread	corn
water	wine
flax	silver
oil	gold
drink	wood
	flax

10 And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

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

13 And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.

BAALIM (ba'-al-im), the plural of BAAL. The Baalim were the gods of the land who were worshipped by the people of Israel. The offering of children, sexual activity, and frenzy bloody dancing were associated with worship (Jer. 19:5; 1 Kings 14:23-24). Worship of Baal brought forth the wrath of God in Divine judgment.

14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

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

ACHOR (a'-kor; trouble), was a valley SW of Jericho where Achan was killed for disobeying the Lord (Josh. 7:24). When there is repentance and faith the valley of trouble can become the door of hope.

16 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me no more Baali.

ISHI (i'-shi; salutary, my husband), was a name that the Israelites gave to the Lord. It replaced Baali (my master) because it described more accurately the relationship between God and Israel. The name Baal was associated with the worship of a heathen god (Hos. 2:16).

BAALI (ba'-al-i; my master). The proper understanding is that Israel will come back to her covenant relationship with the Lord whereby she will look upon God as her husband. The name Baali had been so connected with idolatrous worship that God refuses any more to be called by a common title.

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

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

19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.

BETROTH (2:19). In the East, a betrothal took place when a certain amount of money or other tribute was paid by the groom for the bride (2 Sam. 3:14). The price of betrothal for Israel will be God's righteousness, justice, loving kindness, mercies, and faithfulness.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;

22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

JEZREEL (jez'-re-el; God sows), was the symbolic name given to the eldest son of the prophet Hosea (Hos. 1:4) and to Israel (Hos. 2:22). As Jezreel once spoke of utter hopelessness (Hos. 1:9), so now Jezreel will signify the triumph of God on behalf of His people.

23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

HOSEA 3

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

FLAGONS OF WINE (3:1). The Israelites are represented as lovers of cakes of raisins. Cakes of raisins were considered a delicacy to be used in times of celebration as when David brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:19). Israel loved her luxuries more than she loved her God.

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

FIFTEEN PIECES OF SILVER (3:2). The price may have been paid half in money and half in corn. The whole amount was equal to the value of a slave (Ex. 21:32; Zech. 11:12, 13).

3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

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

EPHOD (e'-fod; oracular), was a richly embroidered garment of linen worn by the priests of Israel (Ex. 28:6-11). The ephod was deeply symbolic of the Person of Jesus Christ as High Priest (Heb. 8:1-6). The line of white of the righteousness of Christ. The scarlet speaks of his bloody work of atonement on the cross. Purple is the color of royalty while gold speaks of the divinity of the Lord. Blue represents the heavenly origin of Jesus.

TERAPHIM (ter'-af-im), refers to household idols which were used as a form of divination. They were considered to be very valuable. During the days of King Josiah spiritual reform took place and the teraphims were destroyed (2 Kings 23:24).

5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

HOSEA 4

1 HEAR the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

CONTROVERSY (4:1). This is a forensic word indicating a court case (cf. Ex. 23:2; Deut. 17:8; 19:17; 25:1). God takes Israel to court at time (Jer. 25:31; 50:34; Mic. 6:2; 7:9). He charges Israel with having no truth, no mercy, and no knowledge of God. He charges Israel with swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery, violence and murder so that "blood touches blood." There is no end to crime and injustice.

2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

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

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

5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.

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

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

11 Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

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

13 They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

I WILL NOT PUNISH YOUR DAUGHTER (4:14). The meaning is that the Lord will not treat the people as His children but as those out side the covenant (cf. 1:8).

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

GILGAL (ghil'-gal; rolling), was in the hill country of Ephraim, about 8 miles NW of Bethel. Saul was sent by Samuel to be confirmed as king over Israel here (1 Sam. 11:15).

BETH-AVEN (beth-a'-ven; house of nothingness, house of idolatry), refers to a place in the mountains of Benjamin, E of Bethel (Josh. 7:2; 1 Sam. 13:5). Hosea used this name in contempt after it had become the place for idolatry (Hos. 4:15; 10:5; cf. Amos 5:5).

NOR SWEAR, THE LORD LIVETH (4:15). This phrase was particularly offensive to God because so many false prophets had used the phrase to justify falsehood (cf. Isa. 48:1,2; Jer. 5:2).

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

BACKSLIDING, refers to a regression in morality and a passion for holy things; a turning away from God. The particular reference in Hosea 4:16 is to the women who have fattened themselves on the poor (cf. Amos 4:1).

17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. The prophets of God denounced the tribe for (Hos. 4:17), spiritual unfaithfulness (8:9-10), and political alliances with heathen nations (12:1). Israel as a nation is called Ephraim as it refers to the largest and most powerful tribes of Israel.

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

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

WIND (4:19). God's judgment.

HOSEA 5

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

MIZPAH, MIZPEH (miz'-pah; look out, watch-tower), refers to a town in Gilead, E of the Jordan (Judg. 10:17; 11:11).

TABOR, MOUNT, refers to a mountain on the boundary of Issachar, 12 miles N of Mt. Gilboa, 5 1/2 miles SE of Nazareth.

2 And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.

AND THE REVOLTERS ARE PROFOUND (5:2). Or, "And the apostates have deepened [increased] slaughter, and I [will increase] punishment to them all."

3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

LATTER RAIN (6:3). These rains come in March and April and are vital to the crops (Deut. 11:14). The latter rains were an occasion for rejoicing (Job 29:23; Prov. 16:15; Joel 2:23).

4 They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.

5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

6 They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.

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

STRANGE CHILDREN (5:7). Or, "spurious" children.

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

GIBEAH (ghib'-e-ah; hill), refer to a city belonging to Benjamin (Judg. 19:14) located about three miles N of Jerusalem. The city first appears in the story of the Levite and his concubine (Judg. 19, 20).

RAMAH (ra'-mah; height), located N of Jerusalem finds prominence in the prophecies of Isaiah (10:29) and Hosea (5:8).

BETH-AVEN (beth-a'-ven; house of nothingness, house of idolatry), was a town in the mountains of Benjamin E of Bethel (Josh. 7:2; 1 Sam. 13:5). Hosea used this name in mockery for idolatrous Bethel (Hos. 4:15; 10:5; cf. Amos 5:5).

AFTER THEE, O BENJAMIN (5:8). Having conquered the North, the Lord now threatens the Southern capital.

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

10 The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

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

WALKED AFTER THE COMMANDMENT (5:11). The reference may be to the fact that the people readily accepted the image worship instituted by Jeroboam (cf. 1 Kings 12:28-32).

12 Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

THEN WENT EPHRAIM TO THE ASSYRIAN (5:13). This refers to the fact that both Israel and Judah promised to be a vassal to the Assyrian king hoping to gain his protection (2 Kings 15:19 speaks of the embassy of Menahem and 2 Kings 16:7 speaks of the embassy of Ahaz).

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. In time, the subjects of Ephraim fell into apostasy and gross iniquity breaking forth the wrath of God (Hos. 5; 6; 7; 9; 2 Kings 17; Ezek. 23).

ASSYRIAN (as-sir'-e'-un) is a reference to any one of or from Assyria (Isa. 10:5).

JAREB (ja'-reb; contentious), is either a name or a description of the King of Assyria (Hos. 10:6).

14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

HOSEA 6

1 COME, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

HARVEST (6:11). In scripture judgment is likened to a harvest (Jer. 51:33; Joel 3:13).

2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

AFTER TWO DAYS (6:2), refers to a very brief time. Notice 1 Kings 17:12 and Isaiah 7:21 for the indefinite use of "two."

3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

5 Therefore have I hewed them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

7 But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

LIKE MEN (6:7). Better, "like Adam." The word "there" indicates that Palestine was to Israel as Paradise was to Adam.

8 Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood.

GILEAD (ghil'-e-ad; rugged), refers to a city in the region of Gilead condemned by the prophet Hosea (Hos. 6:8). The name Gilead in this passage is probably a poetic shortening of Ramoth Gilead or Jabesh Gilead, two of the cities of Gilead.

POLLUTED WITH BLOOD (6:8). Ramoth-Gilead, the chief city of the district, had become notorious for idolatry and bloodshed even though it was a priestly city (2 Kings 15:25).

9 And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness.

IN THE WAY BY CONSENT (6:9). Better, "in the way towards Shechem," another city of refuge. It is possible that these cities of refuge on the two sides of the Jordan had become safe havens for bandits.

LEWDNESS (6:9). Literally, premeditated (cf. Isa. 32:7). This is evil with a purpose.

10 I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.

11 Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

HOSEA 7

1 WHEN I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. The tribe enjoyed a position of prestige and significance in the affairs of the Hebrew people from the very beginning (Judg 8:2ff). However, their came a time when their religion was mixed with paganism and their character was weak. They were like a cake not turned in baking which would be half bread and half dough.

SAMARIA (sa-ma'-re-ah), was the capital city of the N kingdom of Israel. A strong watchtower on the SW protected it.

2 And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

3 They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

4 They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened.

UNTIL IT BE LEAVENED (7:4). Only for a little while would the Israelites interrupt their licentiousness (cf. 2 Pet. 2:14). As leaven will permeate the whole loaf, so sin permeates all of life.

5 In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners.

DAY OF OUR KING (7:5). The reference would be to a birthday or coronation day which would be celebrated with licentiousness.

WINE (7:5). Proverbs 20:1 teaches that wine is a scoffer. Here, the drunkard reaches out his hand for more wine.

STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND (7:5). Those who hold drink together hold out their cups of wine to each other.

6 For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.

LIKE AN OVEN (7:6). When the door of an oven is closed there is no sign of heat. The princes "like an oven" hide their evil intentions until they are ready to destroy the king.

BAKER (7:6). Israel is like a lazy baker who has heated the oven and gone to sleep. The heart of Israel is like an oven. Sin rests on the inside and heats until it bursts into flames. In the morning, sin will consume the nation.

7 They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me.

ALL THEIR KINGS ARE FALLEN (7:7). King Zechariah was killed by Shallum, Shallum by Menahem, Pekahiah by Pekah, and Peakah by Hoshea. All of them did evil in the sight of the Lord.

8 Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.

9 Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

10 And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

11 Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

A SILLY DOVE (7:11). When Hoshea became king of Israel in 732 BC, he revolted against Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria. Hoshea felt brave enough to revolt because he had purchased the assistance of the king of Egypt by means of presents that he might shake off the Assyrian yoke. This political alliance was made despite the fact that Hoshea had formerly made a covenant with Asshur and had pledged allegiance to Shalmanezzer.

WITHOUT HEART (7:11). Without understanding. As a dove will fly into danger so the Israelites foolishly sought the foreign alliance which would ruin them.

ASSYRIA (as-sir'-e-ah), refers to a kingdom between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The favorite pursuits of the Assyrian kings included war and hunting.

12 When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.

13 Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

WOE (7:13). Hosea is the only one of the minor prophets to use this term. The word speaks of a last warning and is associated with a sinful nation (Num. 21:29; cf. Isa. 3:11; Jer. 13:27; Ezek.24:6).

14 And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.

15 Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.

BOUND AND STRENGTHENED (7:15). Or, "admonished them."

16 They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

RAGE (7:16). Or, "insolence."

HOSEA 8

1 SET the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

2 Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.

3 Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.

4 They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

I KNEW IT NOT (8:4), or, "it was without my approval."

5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?

SAMARIA (sa-ma'-re-ah), was the capital city of the N kingdom of Israel. A temple dedicated to the worship of Baal was constructed during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel.

6 For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

8 Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

9 For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.

ASSYRIA (as-sir'-e-ah), refers to a kingdom between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The Assyrian army was ruthless, savage, and efficient. The cruelty of the soldiers included burning cities, burning children, impaling victims on stakes, beheading, stripping the skin off while the victim was still alive, and cutting off hands.

WILD ASS (8:9), indicating speaks of behavior that is intractable and wayward.

HIRED LOVERS (8:9). Presents were sent to foreign nations in order to form an alliance.

10 Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

11 Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. In addition to making political alliances with heathen nations instead of trusting in the Lord, the tribe also engaged in idolatry and sensual acts of worship.

ALTARS TO SIN (8:11). This sin was specifically prohibited in Deuteronomy 12:13,14. Those who committed it were warned that they would be forced to serve idols in a foreign land (Deut. 4:28).

12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

13 They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

OFFERINGS (8:13). The word used here for offerings occurs only once in the Old Testament. It is derived from a word meaning "to give." God rejects all sacrifices designed to earn or merit salvation.

RETURN TO EGYPT (8:13). While a few from Judah did return to Egypt (2 Kings 23:34; 25:26), the majority of the captives were sent to the land of Assyria (2 Kings 17:23).

14 For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

ALTARS TO SIN (8:11). This sin was specifically prohibited in Deuteronomy 12:13,14. Those who committed it were warned that they would be forced to serve idols in a foreign land (Deut. 4:28).

HOSEA 9

1 REJOICE not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every corn floor.

LOVED A REWARD UPON EVERY CORNFLOOR (9:1). Israel loved to see her grain floors full and attributed the prosperity to the false idols (cf. Hos. 2:12; Jer. 44:17).

2 The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.

3 They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

ASSYRIA (as-sir'-e-ah), refers to a kingdom between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Assyria became the tool of God for the expression of divine discipline against Israel because of their sin and idolatry.

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

5 What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD?

6 For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

MEMPHIS (mem'-fis), refers to an important ancient Egyptian capitol on the W bank of the Nile river about ten miles N of Cairo. Established by Menes (2900 BC), Memphis lost its influence after the founding of Alexandria. During the Middle Ages its ruins were carried away to build Cairo. The Hebrews knew Memphis as Noph (Isa. 19:13). The prophets denounced the city (Jer. 46:19; Ezek. 30:13; Hos. 9:6). After the fall of Judah, some Jews settled at Memphis (Jer. 44:1). At this time the pyramids and tombs were ancient and well known. Memphis was a famous fort in Necropolis.

SILVER. The silver which the people had multiplied (2:8) and used for idols (8:4) would not be taken in their flight. Wild flowers would grow over their hiding places for the land would become desolate.

NETTLES. The Hebrew root means to be prickly or pointed, such as a bramble or other thorny weed. The plant referred to is Acanthus Syracuse. The plant is not hardy in winter.

7 The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

IT HATH NO STALK (9:7). Better, "He hath no standing corn" (RV). There is no benefit to the sowing of grain.

8 The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.

WATCHMAN (9:8). A watchman could be one who served God faithfully (Ezek. 3:17; 32:2). But a watchman could also indicate distrust. Laban distrusted Jacob and wanted God to be a watchman (Gen. 31:49). The wicked are watchmen of the righteous in order to slay them (Psa. 37:32). Israel watches the servants of God in order to destroy them.

9 They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

GIBEAH (ghib'-e-ah; hill), refer to a city belonging to Benjamin (Judg. 19:14) located about three miles N of Jerusalem.

10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

BAAL-PEOR (ba"-al-pe'-or; lord of Peor), was a god, probably Chemosh, of the Moabites whose worship took place on the top of Mount Peor. While encamped at Shittim, the men of Israel were encouraged to engage in the sexual activity involved in the worship of this deity and were punished by the Lord as a result (Num. 25:1-9; Psa. 106:28; Hos. 9:10).

11 As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. The tribe became a leader among the tribes of Israel (Isa. 7:2, 5, 9, 17; Hos. 9:3-16).

12 Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!

13 Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.

TYRUS (ti'-rus), TYRE, refers to an ancient Phoenician city located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, 25 miles from Sidon and 35 miles from Mount Carmel. The gospel was heard by the citizens of Tyre (Mark 3:8; 7:24).

14 Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers.

GILGAL (ghil'-gal; rolling), was in the hill country of Ephraim, about 8 miles NW of Bethel. Saul grew impatient here and sinned against the Lord by offering an unauthorized sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:1-10).

16 Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth,

yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.

17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

HOSEA 10

1 ISRAEL is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

2 Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

3 For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?

TO US (10:3). Israel shall be made to realize that their king shall not be able to save them without the LORD's help (cf. 1 Sam. 8).

WE HAVE NO KING (10:3). In the early part of their history, God was declared to be the King of Israel (Ex. 15:18). He was acknowledged as such by the people (Psa. 10:16; 29:10) until He was rejected (1 Sam. 8:7; 10:19).

4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

HEMLOCK, refers to a noxious, poisonous weed.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

BETH-AVEN (beth-a'-ven; house of nothingness, house of idolatry), refers to a town in the mountains of Benjamin near Ai, E of Bethel (Josh. 7:2; 1 Sam. 13:5). Hosea used this name in derision after it became a place of idolatry (Hos. 4:15; Amos 5:5).

6 It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

ASSYRIA (as-sir'-e-ah), refers to a kingdom between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Because of the cruelty and idolatry of the Assyrians, the Israelites carried deep hostility against this nation.

JAREB (ja'-reb; contentious), may refer to an Assyrian king to whom Ephraim appealed for help (Hos. 5:13).

7 As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

SAMARIA (sa-ma'-re-ah), was the capital city of the N kingdom of Israel. The city was conquered by Shalmaneser and Sargon after a three year's siege (2 Kings 18:9-12), in 721 BC as the prophets of God foretold.

8 The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

AVEN (a'-ven; nothingness, vanity, an idol), is another name for Beth-Aver, or Bethel which was to be utterly destroyed.

9 O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.

GIBEAH (ghib'-e-ah; hill), refer to a city belonging to Benjamin (Judg. 19:14) located about three miles N of Jerusalem. The prophet Habakkuk may have been from here (Hos. 10:9).

10 It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.

TWO FURROWS (10:10), may refer to the transgression of setting up of the two calves.

11 And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.

EPHRAIM TO RIDE (10:11). God will take from Israel the comfort and liberty which she once enjoyed and will cause her to know servitude and suffering.

JACOB (ja'-cub; supplanter), was the son of Isaac by Rebekah. Twenty years after he had deceived his brother, Jacob desired to be reconciled with his brother, Esau, though he was still afraid of him (Gen. 32:7).

12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

13 Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.

14 Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

SHALMAN (shal'-man; thanks), was an Assyrian king who destroyed Beth-Arbel, c. 536 BC.

BETH-ARBEL (beth-ar'-bel; house of Arbel), located 4 miles NW of Tiberias, was the scene of a massacre of the people by Shalman.

15 So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

BETHEL (beth'-el; house of God), refers to a town 12 miles N of Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Bethel united with the citizens of Ai and against the Israelites in the second battle with Joshua (Josh. 8:9-17).

HOSEA 11

1 WHEN Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

BAALIM (ba'-al-im), is the plural of Baal. The Baalim were the gods of the land. They owned the land and controlled its productivity. In fear and respect the people engaged in lascivious activities.

3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. At the First Census in the wilderness the tribe numbered 40,500, and ranked as tenth. At the Second Census the tribe numbered only 32,500, and ranked eleventh (Num. 1:32, 33; 2:19).

4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

CORDS OF A MAN (11:4). Not by violence but with gentleness would God express His tender regard for His people.

5 He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.

ASSYRIAN (as-sir'-e'-un) is a reference to any one of or from Assyria (Isa. 10:5), the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

6 And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.

BRANCHES (11:6), i.e. fortresses.

7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

BACKSLIDING is a turning away from the Lord. This sin involved a change in one's state and standing with the Lord for the covenant relationship was broken as the soul returned to sin.

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

ADMAH (ad'-mah; red earth; fort) was located in the valley of Siddim (Gen. 10:19) near Zeboiim and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24; Deut. 29:23). It may be the same as Adam (Josh. 3:16).

ZEBOIM (ze-bo'-im; gazelles), is the name of a town which the Lord destroyed. It was occupied by the Benjamites after the return from the Captivity (Neh. 11:34). Although the exact site is not known, it probably was in the hills bordering the Plain of Sharon, north of Lydda.

9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and

not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

10 They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

TREMBLE (11:10), or, "shall flutter." Israel shall fly hastily as they quickly come to enjoy the restoration to privileges and then the Lord will move in anger against their enemies (Isa. 60:8).

11 They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.

I WILL NOT ENTER INTO THE CITY (11:9). The promise is either to not enter into the city of Samaria or to come with wrath.

12 Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

JUDITH YET RULETH. A better translation of this phrase conveys the sense that Judah still wandereth with respect to God. While He is faithful they are faithless (cf. Jer. 2:31).

HOSEA 12

1 EPHRAIM feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

JACOB (ja'-cub; supplanter), was the son of Isaac by Rebekah. While returning home after twenty years, at the ford of the Jabbok, Jacob was left alone where he met the Living Lord (Gen. 32:24).

3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us;

BETHEL (beth'-el; house of God), refers to a town 12 miles N of Jerusalem. The town was destroyed by fire at least four times during the twelfth and eleventh centuries.

5 Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial.

6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

7 He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

HE IS A MERCHANT (12:7). "He" is not Israel, who prevailed with God, but Canaan, a deceitful merchant, much like those he loved to expel from the land.

8 And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

NONE INIQUITY IN ME THAT WERE SIN (7:8). The hardness of the human heart is such that men regard themselves as having God's favor because they are successful in their sin (cf. Deut. 29:19).

9 And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

11 Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

GILEAD (ghil'-e-ad; rugged), refers to a city (Hos. 6:8; 12:11), which may be identified with Gilead near Mizpah (Judg. 10:17).

GILGAL (ghil'-gal; rolling), was in the hill country of Ephraim, about 8 miles NW of Bethel. Judah gathered at Gilgal to greet David after he had destroyed the rebels under the authority of his son Absalom (2 Sam. 19).

12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

JACOB (ja'-cub; supplanter), was the son of Isaac by Rebekah. One dark lonely night, Jacob found himself suddenly engaged in a wrestling match with the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 32).

SYRIA (sir'-e-ah; height), refers to the land occupied by the Aramaeans to the N and NE of Israel. Damascus of Syria is one of the oldest cities in the world (Gen. 14:15; 15:2).

13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

14 Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

HOSEA 13

1 WHEN Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. The warriors of this tribe were fierce. According to ancient rabbinical authorities the standard of Ephraim was a golden flag with the picture of a calf.

BAAL (ba'-al; master, lord), worship was denounced by the prophets of God, especially by Jeremiah (Jer. 19:4, 5). It was a bloody, sensual style of worship.

2 And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

3 Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

4 Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

5 I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.

6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.

7 Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them:

8 I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

CAUL, usually refers to the fatty covering of the liver (Lev. 3:4). In Hosea 13:8 the caul refers to the membrane enclosing the heart.

9 O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

11 I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.

13 The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.

14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

15 Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

HE SHALL SPOIL (13:15). That is, the Assyrian army, symbolized by the east wind shall spoil Ephraim. The 16th verse is in the Hebrew, Septuagint and the Vulgate, the 1st verse of chapter 14.

16 Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

SAMARIA (sa-ma'-re-ah), was the capital city of the N kingdom of Israel. The worship of Baal was introduced by King Ahab which led the prophets to pronounce the ultimate destruction of the city (1 Kings 16:32, 33; 2 Kings 10:25).

HOSEA 14

1 O ISRAEL, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

CALVES OF OUR LIPS (14:2). The reference is to the sacrifices of thanksgiving of the lips (cf. Heb. 13:15).

3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

ASSHUR (ash'-ur; a step), is the name of a people, a man, and a foreign god. The word Asshur denotes ASSYRIA, a city of Assyria, or the Assyrians as a people (Gen. 10:11; Num. 24:22,24; Ezra 4:2). Asshur was a son of Shem (1 Chr. 1:17). He is regarded as the ancestor of the

Assyrians. Asshur was also the name of the chief god of the Assyrians. Asshur was a god of war, conquest, and military strength.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

BACKSLIDING, in the Hebrew, has the idea of "going back" into moral sin or being stubborn like a heifer (Hos. 4:16) to spiritual matters; turning back (Jer. 3:6; 8:5).

5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

LEBANON (le-ba'-na; white), refers to a mountain range of Syria. Warring, independent tribes, some of whom Joshua had to conquer, originally inhabited the area (Josh. 11:2-18).

6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

8 Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

EPHRAIM, TRIBE OF, refers to the descendants of EPHRAIM, the second son of Joseph. The boundaries of the tribe are given in Joshua 16 (cf. 1 Chronicles 7:28, 29).

9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.