

## Hosea

The word of the LORD that came to Hose'a the son of Be-e'ri, in the days of Uzzi'ah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezeki'ah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jerobo'am the son of Jo'ash, king of Israel. When the LORD first spoke through Hose'a, the LORD said to Hose'a, "Go, take to yourself a wife of  
5 harlotry and have children of harlotry, for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the LORD." So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Dibla'im, and she conceived and bore him a son. And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house  
10 of Israel. And on that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Call her name Not pitied, for I will no more have pity on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the LORD their God; I will not deliver them by  
15 bow, nor by sword, nor by war, nor by horses, nor by horsemen." When she had weaned Not pitied, she conceived and bore a son. And the LORD said, "Call his name Not my people, for you are not my people and I am not your God." Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place  
20 where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to

them, "Sons of the living God." And the people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say to your brother, "My people," and to your sister, "She has  
5 obtained pity." "Plead with your mother, plead--for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband--that she put away her harlotry from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and set her like a parched land, and slay her with thirst. Upon her children also I will have no  
10 pity, because they are children of harlotry. For their mother has played the harlot; she that conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.' Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns; and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. She  
15 shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them. Then she shall say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now.' And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold which they used for Ba'al. Therefore I will  
20 take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season; and I will take

away my wool and my flax, which were to cover her nakedness. Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall rescue her out of my hand. And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts. And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, of which she said, 'These are my hire, which my lovers have given me.' I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall devour them. And I will punish her for the feast days of the Ba'als when she burned incense to them and decked herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the LORD.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her her vineyards, and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. "And in that day, says the LORD, you will call me, 'My husband,' and no longer will you call me, 'My Ba'al.' For I will remove the names of the Ba'als from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more. And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness

and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in  
faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD. "And in that day, says the  
LORD, I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth; and the  
earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer  
5 Jezreel; and I will sow him for myself in the land. And I will have pity on  
Not pitied, and I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people'; and he  
shall say "Thou art my God." And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a  
woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the  
LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love  
10 cakes of raisins." So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer  
and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for  
many days; you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man; so will  
I also be to you." For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without  
king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim.  
15 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God,  
and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his  
goodness in the latter days. Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel;  
for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no  
faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is  
20 swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all

bounds and murder follows murder. Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air; and even the fish of the sea are taken away. Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest. You shall

5 stumble by day, the prophet also shall stumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; I will

10 change their glory into shame. They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity. And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways, and requite them for their deeds. They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the harlot, but not multiply; because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish harlotry. Wine and new wine take away

15 the understanding. My people inquire of a thing of wood, and their staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the harlot. They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains, and make offerings upon the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the

20 harlot, and your brides commit adultery. I will not punish your daughters

when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for  
the men themselves go aside with harlots, and sacrifice with cult prostitutes,  
and a people without understanding shall come to ruin. Though you play the  
harlot, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go  
5 up to Beth-a'ven, and swear not, "As the LORD lives." Like a stubborn  
heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a  
broad pasture? E'phraim is joined to idols, let him alone. A band of  
drunkards, they give themselves to harlotry; they love shame more than their  
glory. A wind has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed  
10 because of their altars. Hear this, O priests! Give heed, O house of Israel!  
Hearken, O house of the king! For the judgment pertains to you; for you  
have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. And they have  
made deep the pit of Shittim; but I will chastise all of them. I know  
E'phraim, and Israel is not hid from me; for now, O E'phraim, you have  
15 played the harlot, Israel is defiled. Their deeds do not permit them to return  
to their God. For the spirit of harlotry is within them, and they know not  
the LORD. The pride of Israel testifies to his face; E'phraim shall stumble in  
his guilt; Judah also shall stumble with them. With their flocks and herds  
they shall go to seek the LORD, but they will not find him; he has  
20 withdrawn from them. They have dealt faithlessly with the LORD; for they

have borne alien children. Now the new moon shall devour them with their fields. Blow the horn in Gib'e-ah, the trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth-a'ven; tremble, O Benjamin! E'phraim shall become a desolation in the day of punishment; among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure. The

5   princes of Judah have become like those who remove the landmark; upon them I will pour out my wrath like water. E'phraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, because he was determined to go after vanity. Therefore I am like a moth to E'phraim, and like dry rot to the house of Judah. When E'phraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then E'phraim went to Assyria, and

10   sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound. For I will be like a lion to E'phraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will rend and go away, I will carry off, and none shall rescue. I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress they seek me, saying, "Come, let us

15   return to the LORD; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth." What shall I do

20   with you, O E'phraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is

like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. Therefore I have  
hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth,  
and my judgment goes forth as the light. For I desire steadfast love and not  
sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings. But at Adam  
5 they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me. Gilead is  
a city of evildoers, tracked with blood. As robbers lie in wait for a man, so  
the priests are banded together; they murder on the way to Shechem, yea,  
they commit villainy. In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;  
Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel is defiled. For you also, O Judah, a  
10 harvest is appointed. When I would restore the fortunes of my people, when  
I would heal Israel, the corruption of Ephraim is revealed, and the wicked  
deeds of Samaria; for they deal falsely, the thief breaks in, and the bandits  
raid without. But they do not consider that I remember all their evil works.  
Now their deeds encompass them, they are before my face. By their  
15 wickedness they make the king glad, and the princes by their treachery. They  
are all adulterers; they are like a heated oven, whose baker ceases to stir the  
fire, from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened. On the day of our  
king the princes became sick with the heat of wine; he stretched out his  
hand with mockers. For like an oven their hearts burn with intrigue; all night  
20 their anger smolders; in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. All of



them are hot as an oven, and they devour their rulers. All their kings have fallen; and none of them calls upon me. E'phraim mixes himself with the peoples; E'phraim is a cake not turned. Aliens devour his strength, and he knows it not; gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, and he knows it not. The  
5 pride of Israel witnesses against him; yet they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him, for all this. E'phraim is like a dove, silly and without sense, calling to Egypt, going to Assyria. As they go, I will spread over them my net; I will bring them down like birds of the air; I will chastise them for their wicked deeds. Woe to them, for they have strayed  
10 from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against me. They do not cry to me from the heart, but they wail upon their beds; for grain and wine they gash themselves, they rebel against me. Although I trained and strengthened their arms, yet they devise evil against me. They turn to Ba'al; they are like a  
15 treacherous bow, their princes shall fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongue. This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt. Set the trumpet to your lips, for a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have broken my covenant, and transgressed my law. To me they cry, My God, we Israel know thee. Israel has spurned the good; the  
20 enemy shall pursue him. They made kings, but not through me. They set up

princes, but without my knowledge. With their silver and gold they made  
idols for their own destruction. I have spurned your calf, O Sama'ria. My  
anger burns against them. How long will it be till they are pure in Israel? A  
workman made it; it is not God. The calf of Sama'ria shall be broken to  
5 pieces. For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The  
standing grain has no heads, it shall yield no meal; if it were to yield, aliens  
would devour it. Israel is swallowed up; already they are among the nations  
as a useless vessel. For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild ass wandering  
alone; E'phraim has hired lovers. Though they hire allies among the nations,  
10 I will soon gather them up. And they shall cease for a little while from  
anointing king and princes. Because E'phraim has multiplied altars for  
sinning, they have become to him altars for sinning. Were I to write for him  
my laws by ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing. They  
love sacrifice; they sacrifice flesh and eat it; but the LORD has no delight in  
15 them. Now he will remember their iniquity, and punish their sins; they shall  
return to Egypt. For Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces; and  
Judah has multiplied fortified cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities,  
and it shall devour his strongholds. Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the  
peoples; for you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved  
20 a harlot's hire upon all threshing floors. Threshing floor and winevat shall not

feed them, and the new wine shall fail them. They shall not remain in the land of the LORD; but E'phraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria. They shall not pour libations of wine to the LORD; and they shall not please him with their sacrifices. Their bread shall be like

5 mourners' bread; all who eat of it shall be defiled; for their bread shall be for their hunger only; it shall not come to the house of the LORD. What will you do on the day of appointed festival, and on the day of the feast of the LORD? For behold, they are going to Assyria; Egypt shall gather them, Memphis shall bury them. Nettles shall possess their precious things of silver;

10 thorns shall be in their tents. The days of punishment have come, the days of recompense have come; Israel shall know it. The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad, because of your great iniquity and great hatred. The prophet is the watchman of E'phraim, the people of my God, yet a fowler's snare is on all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God. They

15 have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gib'e-ah: he will remember their iniquity, he will punish their sins. Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree, in its first season, I saw your fathers. But they came to Ba'al-pe'or, and consecrated themselves to Ba'al, and became detestable like the thing they loved.

20 E'phraim's glory shall fly away like a bird--no birth, no pregnancy, no

conception! Even if they bring up children, I will bereave them till none is left. Woe to them when I depart from them! E'phraim's sons, as I have seen, are destined for a prey; E'phraim must lead forth his sons to slaughter. Give them, O LORD--what wilt thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb and  
5 dry breasts. Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels. E'phraim is stricken, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit. Even though they bring forth, I will slay their beloved children. My God will cast them off, because they  
10 have not hearkened to him; they shall be wanderers among the nations. Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased the more altars he built; as his country improved he improved his pillars. Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt. The LORD will break down their altars, and destroy their pillars. For now they will say: "We have no king,  
15 for we fear not the LORD, and a king, what could he do for us?" They utter mere words; with empty oaths they make covenants; so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field. The inhabitants of Sama'ria tremble for the calf of Beth-a'ven. Its people shall mourn for it, and its idolatrous priests shall wail over it, over its glory which has departed  
20 from it. Yea, the thing itself shall be carried to Assyria, as tribute to the

great king. E'phraim shall be put to shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his idol. Sama'ria's king shall perish, like a chip on the face of the waters. The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains,

5 Cover us, and to the hills, Fall upon us. From the days of Gib'e-ah, you have sinned, O Israel; there they have continued. Shall not war overtake them in Gib'e-ah? I will come against the wayward people to chastise them; and nations shall be gathered against them when they are chastised for their double iniquity. E'phraim was a trained heifer that loved to thresh, and I

10 spared her fair neck; but I will put E'phraim to the yoke, Judah must plow, Jacob must harrow for himself. Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain salvation upon you. You have plowed iniquity, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies.

15 Because you have trusted in your chariots and in the multitude of your warriors, therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people, and all your fortresses shall be destroyed, as Shalman destroyed Beth-ar'bel on the day of battle; mothers were dashed in pieces with their children. Thus it shall be done to you, O house of Israel, because of your great wickedness.

20 In the storm the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off. When Israel was a

child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called  
them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Ba'als, and  
burning incense to idols. Yet it was I who taught E'phraim to walk, I took  
them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them  
5 with cords of compassion, with the bands of love, and I became to them as  
one, who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed  
them. They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king,  
because they have refused to return to me. The sword shall rage against their  
cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them in their fortresses.  
10 My people are bent on turning away from me; so they are appointed to the  
yoke, and none shall remove it. How can I give you up, O E'phraim! How  
can I hand you over, O Israel! How can I make you like Admah! How can  
I treat you like Zeboi'im! My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows  
warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not again destroy  
15 E'phraim; for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I  
will not come to destroy. They shall go after the LORD, he will roar like a  
lion; yea, he will roar, and his sons shall come trembling from the west;  
they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the  
land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.  
20 E'phraim has encompassed me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit;

but Judah is still known by God, and is faithful to the Holy One. E'phraim  
herds the wind, and pursues the east wind all day long; they multiply  
falsehood and violence; they make a bargain with Assyria, and oil is carried  
to Egypt. The LORD has an indictment against Judah, and will punish Jacob  
5 according to his ways, and requite him according to his deeds. In the womb  
he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God. He  
strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favor. He met  
God at Bethel, and there God spoke with him-- the LORD the God of hosts,  
the LORD is his name: "So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast  
10 to love and justice, and wait continually for your God." A trader, in whose  
hands are false balances, he loves to oppress. E'phraim has said, "Ah, but I  
am rich, I have gained wealth for myself": but all his riches can never offset  
the guilt he has incurred. I am the LORD your God from the land of Egypt;  
I will again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed feast. I  
15 spoke to the prophets; it was I who multiplied visions, and through the  
prophets gave parables. If there is iniquity in Gilead they shall surely come  
to nought; if in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls, their altars also shall be like  
stone heaps on the furrows of the field. (Jacob fled to the land of Aram,  
there Israel did service for a wife, and for a wife he herded sheep.) By a  
20 prophet the LORD brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was

preserved. E'phraim has given bitter provocation; so his LORD will leave his  
bloodguilt upon him, and will turn back upon him his reproaches. When  
E'phraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel; but he incurred guilt  
through Ba'al and died. And now they sin more and more, and make for  
5 themselves molten images, idols skilfully made of their silver, all of them the  
work of craftsmen. Sacrifice to these, they say. Men kiss calves! Therefore  
they shall be like the morning mist or like the dew that goes early away,  
like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor or like smoke from a  
window. I am the LORD your God from the land of Egypt; you know no  
10 God but me, and besides me there is no savior. It was I who knew you in  
the wilderness, in the land of drought; but when they had fed to the full,  
they were filled, and their heart was lifted up; therefore they forgot me. So I  
will be to them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk beside the way. I will  
fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will tear open their breast,  
15 and there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild beast would rend them. I  
will destroy you, O Israel; who can help you? Where now is your king, to  
save you; where are all your princes, to defend you--those of whom you  
said, "Give me a king and princes"? I have given you kings in my anger,  
and I have taken them away in my wrath. The iniquity of E'phraim is bound  
20 up, his sin is kept in store. The pangs of childbirth come for him, but he is



an unwise son; for now he does not present himself at the mouth of the  
womb. Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them  
from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your  
destruction? Compassion is hid from my eyes. Though he may flourish as the  
5 reed plant, the east wind, the wind of the LORD, shall come, rising from the  
wilderness; and his fountain shall dry up, his spring shall be parched; it shall  
strip his treasury of every precious thing. Sama'ria shall bear her guilt,  
because she has rebelled against her God; they shall fall by the sword, their  
little ones shall be dashed in pieces, and their pregnant women ripped open.  
10 Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of  
your iniquity. Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him,  
"Take away all iniquity; accept that which is good and we will render the  
fruit of our lips. Assyria shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses;  
and we will say no more, 'Our God,' to the work of our hands. In thee the  
15 orphan finds mercy." I will heal their faithlessness; I will love them freely,  
for my anger has turned from them. I will be as the dew to Israel; he shall  
blossom as the lily, he shall strike root as the poplar; his shoots shall spread  
out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. They  
shall return and dwell beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden;  
20 they shall blossom as the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of

Lebanon. O E'phraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and  
look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress, from me comes your fruit.

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let  
him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk

5 in them, but transgressors stumble in them. \*

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