

# The Book of Hosea



# Contents



# Hosea

1Yahweh gave Hosea these messages during the years that Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, and when Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.

2When Yahweh spoke for the first time through the prophet Hosea, he said, “Go and marry a prostitute. She will have children because she has given herself to other men. When you marry a prostitute, this will show how my people have been so shamefully unfaithful to me. It will show them how they have left me, their God.”<sup>3</sup> So Hosea married Gomer, daughter of Diblaim. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son.

4Yahweh said to Hosea, “Give your baby the name Jezreel, because I will soon punish the family members of King Jehu for the murders that he committed in the city of Jezreel. I will also bring the kingdom of Israel to an end.”<sup>5</sup> On that day I will destroy the fighting strength of the army of Israel, there in the Valley of Jezreel.”

6Gomer soon became pregnant again, and this time she gave birth to a daughter. Then Yahweh spoke to him, “Give her the name Lo-Ruhamah, which means ‘no mercy,’ because I will no longer have any mercy for the people of Israel, and I will not forgive them for even one sin they have committed.”<sup>7</sup> But I will have mercy on the people of

Judah. I will save them—but not by deadly weapons, the bow, the sword, or battle. I will not save them by armies or by strong horses and those who ride on them. Instead, I, Yahweh myself, will save them.”

8After Gomer had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she became pregnant again and gave birth to a son.<sup>9</sup> Yahweh said “Give him the name Lo-Ammi, which means ‘not my people,’ because you, O Israel, are not my people—and I will no longer protect you as your God.

10One day in the future, the people of Israel will be as numerous as the grains of sand by the sea. No one will be able to count them. I have said to Israel, ‘You are not my people,’—but one day I will say to them, ‘You are the people whom I will protect and love.’<sup>11</sup> On that day I, Yahweh, will gather all the people of Judah and bring them together with all the people of Israel.

They will choose from among themselves a single leader, and they will go out of that land in which they were held as exiles. On that day they will say, ‘Great is the day of Jezreel!’ (Jezreel means, ‘God plants his people in his land.’)

2Call your male fellow Israelites, ‘You are Yahweh’s people,’ and call your female fellow Israelites, ‘Yahweh has been kind to you.’”

2Yahweh said to me, “I want you to accuse Israel, who is like a mother

to you, of being like an unfaithful wife to me.

This nation is no longer like a wife to me,

and I am no longer like a husband to her.

Tell Israel that they must stop acting like a prostitute; she must stop worshiping idols.

Israel must stop worshiping idols. She must stop acting like a woman who leaves her husband and goes to other men.

3If she does not stop,

I will take her clothes off her and make her naked like she was when she was born.

I will make her like the barren wilderness—dry and lifeless; I will make her like a woman dying from thirst in the desert.

4I will have no pity on her people, the people of Israel,

because their nation is like a prostitute.

5Israel is like a prostitute;

she is like a woman who has had these children from doing shameful things with other men.

Israel decided to hurry after these idols whom she loved, to worship other gods.

She thought that it was those gods who gave her bread and water.

She thought that it was those gods who gave her wool, linen, and olive oil, and also wine to drink.

6So I will block Israel's road with thornbushes,

and I will build a wall around her, so that she cannot find the path to take.

7Israel will run after her idols

but she will not find them.

She will search for her false gods,

but she will not find them.

Then, like a prostitute who wants to return to her husband, she will say to me, 'I will go back to you, the one I loved at first,

because my life was better with you than it is now.'

8The people will say this, because they did not know that it was I, Yahweh, who had given them their grain, new wine, and olive oil.

It was I who had given them much silver and gold so they would become wealthy.

- B** ut then they made all that gold and silver into objects to use in worshipping the idol Baal.
- 9Therefore I will take away from Israel all the grain I gave them.
- W** hen the wheat is ready for harvest, I will keep them from getting it.
- T** he new wine that I gave them, I will take it away.
- I** will take away from them all the wool and linen I gave them to make clothes for themselves,
- t** he clothes that covered their nakedness.
- 10I will treat Israel as a man treats his wife when he finds her with other men.
- I** will strip her naked in front of her lovers.
- N** o one will be able rescue her from what I will do to her.
- 11I will make the people in Israel stop holding their celebrations;
- t** hey will stop holding their festivals every year.
- T** hey will no longer celebrate the beginning of every month.
- T** hey will no longer celebrate the Sabbath days.
- T** hey will no longer be able to hold the festivals scheduled throughout the year.
- 12I will destroy all of Israel's grapevines and fig trees.
- T** his is because Israel is like a woman who says, 'These were the things that my lovers gave me in payment.'
- I** , Yahweh, will turn those places into a forest, a thicket in which no vines can grow,
- a** nd where wild animals will devour any fruit that grows there.'
- 13I will punish this woman named Israel for all the times that she burned incense to worship the Baal idols.
- S** he decorated herself with rings and jewelry, as a prostitute would adorn herself for her lovers.
- S** he used to follow her lovers—like Israel has gone after the Baals—those false gods that she worshiped.
- A** nd she forgot about me." This is what Yahweh says.
- 14"I will lead her into the wilderness and tell her that I love her.
- I** will persuade her to love me again. <sup>15</sup> I will give her vineyards back to her once more,

**a** nd in the Valley of Achor I will cause her to hope once more.

**S** he will answer me with love and delight, as it was back in the first days when we first loved each other—

**w** hen I set her free, and she came up out of Egypt.

16At that time,

**I** srael will call me, ‘My Husband,’ as a woman would say to her human husband.

**S** he will no longer call out to a god, ‘My Baal,’ but she will call out to me as ‘My Husband.’

17I will not allow Israel to speak the names of the images of Baal that she used to worship.

**M** y people will forget the names of those Baals and their idols, and my people Israel will never worship them again.

18At that time I will make a covenant for them:

**i** t will be with all the wild animals and birds,

**a** nd even with the little animals that crawl along the ground.

**T** hey will never harm my people again.

**I** will promise to remove all the weapons that are used for fighting battles,

**t** he bows and arrows, and the swords, and every war, I will take them all away and destroy all of them.

**A** nd I will let all of my people rest in peace;

**t** hey will be not be afraid anymore.

19You will be like my wife forever, Israel.

**I** will promise myself to you, by doing what is right, and by loving what is just.

**I** promise to love you and to show you kindness even when you do not deserve it.

20I will keep my promise to you, Israel. I will never lie to you;

**a** nd you will come to know me—my name is Yahweh.

21At that time,

**I** will help you,” says Yahweh.

“ **I** will give a command to the sky,

**a** nd the sky will pour out rain onto the ground.

22And the ground will provide grain, new wine and olive trees, and they will grow for the people of Israel.

23At that time, I will take care of the Israelite people

a s a farmer plants his own land and takes care of his crops.

I will show my love to those people whom I called 'Not my People'.

A nd those whom I called 'Not my People',

I will now call by a new name: 'You are my People'.

T hey will say to me, 'You are our God.'"

3Then Yahweh said to me, "Go and love a woman, even though she is loved by another man, and she is also unfaithful to her husband. You will be like me, because I love the people of Israel, even though they worship other gods and eat raisin cakes in their honor."

2Even though she was a slave, owned by another person, I bought her for 170 grams of silver, and 330 liters of barley grain. <sup>3</sup> Then I said to her, "You will live with me from now on. You will no longer be a prostitute who sleeps with various men. You will not belong to any other man, only to me, and I will be faithful to you and live with you for the rest of my life."

4When I do these things, this is to show that the people of Israel will live for a long time and not have any king ruling over them. They will have no prince, no sacrifices or pillars set up for worship, ephods or idols in their houses. <sup>5</sup> After some time, the people of Israel will return to Yahweh; they will hope that he will receive them back. They will hope to have a descendant of David for their king again. In the later time, they will come to Yahweh to honor him and tremble before him because of his goodness to them.

4Listen to the message Yahweh has for you.

" You people of Israel, Yahweh is accusing you, you who live in this place."

H e says, "I cannot find anyone here who tells the truth.

I cannot see anyone who loves me.

N one of you can honestly say that he knows me.

2You curse and lie, you kill and steal, and you commit adultery.

Y ou have broken every law,

a nd you commit one murder after another.

3Because of what the people are doing, the land is now a wilderness.

- E** very creature that lives here is dying,
- f** rom the animals that live in the fields,
- t** o the birds that fly in the sky;
- e** ven the fish in the sea, they are also dying.
- 4But you must not accuse anyone else for this trouble.
- Y** ou must not allow anyone to correct another person; no one has that right, because everyone is guilty.
- A** nd I am also accusing the priests.  
5 You priests sin during the day
- a** nd the prophets with you sin at night.
- I** promise you, I will destroy Israel, who is like a mother to you.
- 6My people are perishing because you priests have refused to understand me.
- A** nd why do you understand me so little? Because you have rejected the things I have instructed you to do.
- S** o I am rejecting you from being priests to me.
- L** ook at what you have forgotten: You have forgotten the instructions that I, your God, gave to you.
- B** ecause you forgot me, I will forget your children.
- 7The more numerous you priests become,
- t** he more you do the things that I have forbidden.
- Y** ou have abandoned me in order to become shameful.
- 8When other people sin, they bring sacrifices to me, some of which you eat.
- S** o you want the people to sin more and more.
- 9I will punish you priests just as I punish the people.
- I** will punish all of you for your behavior;
- I** will pay you all back for all the wicked deeds you have done.
- 10You all will eat, but you will never get enough. You will always be hungry.
- T** hey will continue to sleep with other women, but the women will not conceive,
- b** ecause you have all abandoned me, Yahweh.
- 11You love to do forbidden sexual acts,
- a** nd to drink wine and new wine.

All these things have made it impossible for you to know right from wrong.

12My own people pray to an idol made from a piece of wood.

They ask their walking staffs to tell them which way they should go!

They are always wanting to sin in sexual ways, so they have stopped obeying me, the God whom they should worship.

13They worship other gods in the places on the tops of the mountains where they have set up idols. They burn offerings to the idols up on those hills—

in all the places where they worship those idols—under the oak trees, poplar trees, and the terebinth trees—

because these trees give good shade.

Following your example, your daughters decided to become prostitutes,

and your daughters-in-law committed adultery.

14But I will not punish the women for turning to prostitution,

or your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery.

It is the men who are doing the very same thing!

The men sleep with prostitutes,

and they offer sacrifices in the houses of idols where there are prostitutes.

It is true: “A people who have not lived as they were taught to live, will come to destruction.”

15Israel, you have left me and gone to idols.

But I hope that Judah will not do the same thing.

You people of Judah, do not go to Gilgal. Do not go up to Beth Aven to worship idols there.

Do not make solemn oaths, calling on me to make good on your promises, adding to your vows the words, ‘As Yahweh lives!’ <sup>16</sup> Israel is as stubborn as a young cow.

Can I now feed them as if they were little lambs in a meadow?

17Ephraim has gone to join idols.

Leave those people alone! <sup>18</sup> When they have finished drinking all their alcoholic drinks

then they will commit even more sexual sins.

Their rulers love to do these shameful things. <sup>19</sup> Someone will attack them; he will be like a whirlwind that lifts them up and carries them away to another place.

Only then will they be ashamed because they gave offerings to the idols.”

5“Listen, you priests!

Pay attention, you people of Israel!

And you members of the king’s family, you also need to listen!

For I will punish all of you.

The things you have done have been like a trap for the people at Mizpah.

The things you have done have become like a net spread out to catch the people who live on Mount Tabor. <sup>2</sup> Those who rebelled against me have now killed so many that they are standing deep in their blood. I tell you that I will punish them all.

3You, the people in Ephraim, the center of Israel—I know you.

I know very well what you are like, you people of Israel.

You people in Ephraim, you have acted like prostitutes.

Yes, you people in Israel are polluted.

4Ephraim and Israel are not able to ask me to forgive them, because of what they have done.

They have chosen to be unfaithful and immoral,

and they do not know me, Yahweh.”

5Israel is proud; because of this others know how guilty she is.

The sins that the people of Israel have committed are making them faithless to Yahweh.

Judah is becoming faithless, too.

6They are hoping to persuade Yahweh to have mercy on them.

They are coming to sacrifice sheep and cattle to him from their flocks and herds.

But they will find that Yahweh will have no mercy on them

because he has stopped helping them; he is leaving them alone.

7They did not keep their promises to Yahweh.

and they have had children by foreign women.

So at the time of the new moon festivals,

- t** hey will perish, together with their cultivated fields.”
- 8Yahweh says, “Blow the ram horns at the city of Gibeah!
- B** low the trumpets at the city of Ramah!
- S** hout a battle cry at the city of Beth Aven!
- L** ead us into battle, you people of the tribe of Benjamin!
- 9I will punish the people of Ephraim and turn their city into a pile of rubble.
- T** his is my promise to the tribes of Israel—I pledge to you all that I will do this.
- 10The leaders of Judah are as bad as people who steal farmland by moving boundary markers;
- t** hey steal land that does not belong to them.
- I** will punish them in a way that will make them perish.
- 11Ephraim will suffer greatly; the people will perish when I punish them,
- b** ecause they were determined to worship idols.
- 12I will destroy Ephraim as a moth destroys wool;
- I** will destroy Judah as rot destroys wood.
- 13When the people of Ephraim realized how weak they were,
- t** hen they asked the people of Assyria for help.
- W** hen the people of Judah realized how weak they were,
- t** hey sent messengers to the great king of Assyria.
- B** ut he could not help you people;
- h** e could not make you people strong again.
- 14I will become like a lion to the people of Ephraim in Israel;
- I** will become like a young lion to the people of Judah.
- I** will destroy them and leave them;
- I** will carry them far away,
- a** nd no one will be able to rescue them.
- 15Then I will go back to where I came from;
- f** rom there I will wait for them to admit that they have sinned;
- I** will wait for them to come and ask me to help them.”

- 6The people say, "Come, let us return to Yahweh.
- H**e has torn our flesh to pieces as a lion tears up his victim.
- H**e did this, but he will heal our wounds.
- H**e has hurt us and made us fall down,
- b**ut he will treat our wounds and bind them up so they will heal.
- 2After the second day he will restore our strength;
- a**nd on the third day he will raise us up,
- s**o we will live close to him.
- 3Try to know Yahweh;
- d**o all you can to be faithful to him.
- I**t is as certain as tomorrow's sunrise
- t**hat he will come to us; he will come to us like the rain,
- l**ike the rain comes in the spring on our fields."
- 4But Yahweh says, "What can I do with you, you people of Ephraim?
- W**hat can I do with you, you people of the tribe of Judah?
- Y**ou love me for just as long as the clouds come in the morning before they disappear again.
- Y**ou love me for just as long as the dew stays before the warm sun shines on it.
- 5I sent my prophets to you,
- a**nd it was as though I had cut you into pieces when they spoke the messages I gave them.
- Y**ou were devastated by what they said to you.
- I**t was as though I had killed you with the words I spoke to you.
- I** spoke about how I would punish you.
- I** told you by the prophets that I was angry with you, and they told you this."
- " Yahweh, you will punish them by commanding that it happen;
- y**our words are like lightning bolts."
- 6Yahweh says, "I want you to be faithful to me forever.
- I** want that more than I want you to offer me sacrifices.
- I** want you to know me—that is much more important to me

than when you give me offerings  
that the priests burn on the altar.

7But like Adam, the first man,

the covenant that they made with  
me and that I, Yahweh, made with  
them—they broke it.

When they did that, they were not  
faithful to me.

8Gilead is a city of people who do  
wicked things;

in the streets of that city are the  
footprints of murderers.

9As robbers make their plans to  
hide and then rob someone walking  
past them,

so are the priests—they band  
together making their plans, just like  
the robbers,

and they commit murder along the  
way to Shechem.

They commit terrible crimes.

10Among the people of Israel, I  
have seen a horrible thing—

the people of Ephraim worship  
idols everywhere.

The people of Israel have become  
filthy by what they have done.

11And for you also, you people of  
Judah,

I have set for you a time when I will  
separate out your good people from  
your bad people.

Just as in the harvest when you  
take all the crops in,

and you keep the good and throw  
away the bad,

that is what is coming for you,  
people of Judah.

That will be the day when I bring  
back the blessings and riches of my  
people once more.”

7As often as I try to heal Israel,

the people openly show that they  
are sinning,

and the people in the city of  
Samaria show the same thing.

They lie and cheat in their buying  
and selling;

they are like lawless men who  
attack people who are walking in the  
streets.

2But they do not take a moment to  
think that I, Yahweh, see everything  
they do.

Everywhere they go, they commit  
evil,

and I see it all.

3The wicked things they do bring  
delight to their king,

**a** nd the king's officials are happy  
when they tell lies.

4They are all sexually immoral;

**t** hey burn with lust like a baker's  
oven that is burning hot;

**o** nce he lights the fire, he does not  
need to put any more wood on it,

**u** ntil he is ready to bake the bread.

5At the king's festivals, his officials  
do outrageous things because they  
are drunk with wine,

**a** nd the king joins in with them as  
they mock me.

6But these same officials then set  
about making plans to murder the  
king.

**T** hey are quietly angry all night,

**a** nd they are openly angry in the  
morning.

7All those officials become so  
angry at the king,

**t** hat they kill all their rulers.

**I** n the end, all their kings were  
killed;

**n** ot one of them called on me,  
Yahweh, to help."

8"Israel joins with other people  
groups,

**b** ut all the people are like a flat  
cake that is only cooked on one side;  
they are weak.

9People who come from far away  
have taken away Israel's strength.

**T** he nation is growing very weak,  
like an old man whose hair is turning  
gray.

**B** ut the nation does not know it is  
weak.

10Israel is so proud that everyone  
else sees it.

**E** ven so, they will not return to  
me—to Yahweh their God.

**T** hey will not try to persuade me to  
have mercy on them, no matter what  
happens to them.

11Israel is like a foolish bird, a  
dove that anyone can easily deceive.

**H** e calls out first to Egypt, and then  
like a bird, he flies up to Assyria.

12But when they are on their way  
there,

**I** will spread my net over them,

**I** will bring them down as a hunter  
brings down birds from the air into a  
net.

**I** will punish them all together.

13How terrible it will be

- f** or my people, because they have abandoned me!
- T** hey will perish
- b** ecause they have rebelled against me.
- I** wanted to rescue them,
- b** ut they kept telling lies against me.
- 14They do not cry out to me; they do not call to me from their hearts;
- t** hey only lie on their beds and howl and cry out.
- T** hey meet together to ask their idols for their grain and new wine.
- T** hey have rebelled against me.
- 15Even though I trained them and helped them become strong,
- e** ven now they are planning to do evil against me.
- 16They go this way and that, but never to me, God Most High.
- T** hey are like a bow that cannot shoot.
- T** heir officers will be killed by their enemies' swords; they will die because they have insulted me.
- T** his is why the people in Egypt will insult them.”
- 8Yahweh says, “Get a trumpet and blow it.
- T** here are enemies swooping down over my people,
- a** s an eagle swoops down over a victim.
- T** his is because my people have left my covenant with them
- a** nd have violated the law I gave them.
- 2My people Israel cry out to me and say,
- ‘ Our God, we are loyal to you!’
- 3But the people of Israel have thrown away what is good,
- s** o their enemies will chase after them.
- 4Israel has appointed kings for themselves,
- b** ut they did not consult with me about it.
- T** hey chose their own kings
- w** ithout asking me to approve them.
- T** hey took their silver and gold and formed them into the idols they worshiped,

**b** ut the people will perish as a result.” <sup>5</sup> The prophet says, “Yes, Yahweh has rejected your idol, you people of Samaria—an idol made in the form of a calf!”

**Y** ahweh says, “Perhaps these people will never again be innocent of evildoing. I am very angry with them!

<sup>6</sup>The shame of it is that this idol came from Israel! A craftsman made it.

**I** t is only an idol; it cannot be the true and living God!

**I** will ensure that someone will smash it to bits.

<sup>7</sup>This is because these people do useless things, so something terrible will destroy them.

**T** heir grain standing in the fields will give no harvest.

**A** nd even if it does, foreign soldiers will eat everything it produces.

<sup>8</sup>Other nations have destroyed Israel’s power.

**N** ow Israel is like an old, broken pot that no one wants.

<sup>9</sup>They asked the king of Assyria for help;

**t** hey were like a wild donkey wandering off by itself.

**T** he people of Israel have tried to pay other nations to protect them.

<sup>10</sup>Although they do this,

**I** will soon gather them up to destroy them.

**T** hey will begin to become poor because they will have to pay money to Assyria’s king.

<sup>11</sup>The people of Ephraim have built many altars on which to offer sacrifices for their sins;

**h** owever, these altars have become places where the people commit terrible sins against me.

<sup>12</sup>Even if I wrote out for the people of Israel my laws ten thousand times,

**t** hey would refuse to obey them.

**T** hey would say they had never heard of them.

<sup>13</sup>Let us think about the sacrifices that they give to me.

**T** hey sacrifice the meat and then they eat it;

**b** ut I, Yahweh, am not pleased with those sacrifices.

**I** will think about their sins and will punish the people for them.

**I** will make them go back to Egypt.

- 14 And why has this happened?  
**T**he people of Israel have forgotten me, the God who made them a nation. Instead of honoring me, they have built huge homes to live in.
- A**nd instead of worshiping Yahweh, the people of Judah have built walls around their cities for protection.
- S**o this is what I, Yahweh, will do:  
**I** will send a fire that will destroy all their palaces and all their fortified cities.”
- 9 Hosea says this: Do not be happy, O Israel; do not celebrate like other people groups!  
**Y**ou have been unfaithful to your God. You have refused to do what he told you.
- A**t every place where people thresh their grain,  
**y**ou give your offerings and sacrifices to idols.
- Y**ou are just like men who pay money to sleep with women.
- 2 Now you will not have enough grain or wine to feed your people.
- Y**ou will have no hope for any new wine, for the vines will fail you.
- 3 The people of Israel will not continue to live in the land that Yahweh has chosen as his own.  
**I**nstead, they will go back to Egypt one day.
- A**nd in Assyria they will have to eat the kind of food that God had forbidden them to eat.
- 4 No longer will they pour out wine to offer it to Yahweh;  
**t**heir sacrifices will not please him at all.
- T**heir sacrifices will be as unacceptable to God as the food that people eat at funerals;  
**a**nd everyone who eats that food becomes unacceptable to God.
- T**hat food will be all they eat;  
**t**hey will not be able to bring it into Yahweh’s house to offer it to him.
- 5 There, in a country far from your home, you will not be able to celebrate the festivals that Yahweh commanded you to celebrate.
- 6 Look! If you escape and the Assyrians do not kill you,  
**t**he army of Egypt will capture you.
- Y**ou will die there, and the people in the city of Memphis will bury you.

- A** ll your wealth in silver will be covered up  
**a** nd lost when the desert plants grow into your homes and take them over.
- 7It is now the time for God to punish you;  
**t** he time has come in which God will pay you back for every sin you have committed.
- A** nd all you people of Israel must realize that these things will happen.
- S** o your false prophets are fools,  
**a** nd those who you thought were inspired by God are actually insane.
- T** his is because you have sinned so much  
**a** nd because you have become Yahweh's enemies.
- 8True prophets are people whom God has assigned to guard the people of Israel.
- B** ut everywhere they go, others set traps for them;  
**e** ven in the temple of their God, others hate them.
- 9The people have polluted themselves by sinning  
**a** s the Israelites did at Gibeah long ago.
- G** od will not forget the wicked things they did;  
**h** e will certainly punish them.
- 10Yahweh says, "When I found Israel, it was like someone finding grapes growing in the wilderness.
- W** hen I saw your ancestors, they were like the very first figs that appear in the year, figs growing on a young fig tree.
- B** ut when they came to Mount Peor,  
**t** hey gave themselves completely to that disgusting idol Baal,  
**a** nd they became as detestable as the idol they loved.
- 11The honor of Ephraim is like a bird that is flying away.  
**I** will make their women so they cannot give birth, no woman will be pregnant, and no one will even conceive a child in the womb.
- 12Even if they raise children not their own,  
**I** will take them from their mothers.  
**I** t will be the worst that could happen to them,

**w** hen I abandon them! **a** nd produces no fruit.  
 13I have seen the people of Israel; **E** ven if they give birth,  
**t** hey were like Tyre; they were like **I** will put to death those children  
 a tree planted in a beautiful meadow. **t** hey love.”  
  
**B** ut they will have to lead their **17**Hosea says, My God rejected the  
 own children out to their enemies, **p** eople of Israel  
 who will slaughter them.” **b** ecause they have not obeyed him,  
  
 14Hosea says, Yahweh, give **a** nd they will wander from one  
 them— **n** ation to another.  
  
**w** hat should you give them? **10**Israel is like a vine  
  
**G** ive them wombs that miscarry, **t** hat produces many bundles of  
 grapes.  
**a** nd let their mothers’ breasts have **B** ut the more their fruit increased,  
 no milk for their babies. **t** he richer they became.  
  
 15Yahweh says, “Because of all the **W** ith that money they made more  
 wicked things my people did at stone columns in honor of their idols.  
 Gilgal,  
  
**t** hat is where I started to hate **2**They are deceitful and cannot be  
 them. **t** rusted;  
  
**A** nd because of all the sinful deeds **b** ut the time has come that they  
 they have done, **m** ust pay for their sins.  
  
**I** will drive them out of the place **Y** ahweh will break their altars into  
 they live. **p** ieces—  
  
**I** will not love them any more; **t** he places where they gave  
 sacrifices to their idols,  
  
**a** ll their officials fight against me. **a** nd he promises to destroy those  
 pillars beside which they worshiped  
 their false gods.  
  
 16Ephraim is like a vine that has **d** ried up

3They say, “We have no king now because we did not honor or respect Yahweh.

**B** ut even if we had a king,

**h** ow could a king help us?”

4The people of Israel make lying promises and false covenants;

**a** nd because their promises are not kept,

**t** heir sort of justice kills people, as poisonous weeds in a field would do.

5Those people of Samaria tremble with fear because of what happened to the calf idols at Beth Aven.

**T** hose people mourn over what happened to those idols,

**a** s did the priests who served them;

**t** hey rejoiced over them and praised their splendor,

**b** ut now those idols have been taken away from them.

6Their idols will be carried to Assyria

**t** o be a gift for the great king.

**T** he people of Israel will be disgraced;

**t** hey will be ashamed

**f** or having trusted in the advice they received by consulting idols.

7The king of Samaria will die.

**H** e will be like a small piece of wood that floats away down a stream.

8The hilltop places known for their wickedness—altars where the people worshiped idols—will all be destroyed.

**T** horns and thistles will grow and cover all the altars that were in Samaria.

**T** he people will beg the mountains and say,

“ Cover us!”

**a** nd to the hills, “Fall on us!”

9People of Israel, since the days of Gibeah you have been sinning;

**i** t is as if you have been living there ever since then, because you think as they did.

**E** nemies will attack you evildoers at Gibeah.

10Yahweh says, “When I decide to act, I will punish them.

**P** eople groups will gather to fight against them;

**t** hose people groups will capture them and put them in chains

- b** ecause of their many sins.
- 11Ephraim is like a trained calf  
**t** hat loves to thresh grain,  
 separating out the grain from the  
 chaff,
- a** nd I did not put a heavy yoke on  
 her tender neck.
- B** ut now I will put Ephraim under  
 that yoke,
- a** nd Judah must plow.
- a** nd Jacob must break up the  
 ground with the harrow.
- 12Plow, now, and do what is right,
- a** nd you will reap the fruit of  
 faithful love.
- D** o the hard work of breaking up  
 the unplowed ground,
- f** or now is the time for you to ask  
 Yahweh to have mercy on you,
- s** o that he may come and rescue  
 you because he does what is right.
- 13You have sinned wickedly, and  
 now you will have to bear the  
 consequences.
- Y** ou told lies, and now you must  
 suffer the results of the lies you told.
- Y** ou have trusted in your own  
 abilities and wisdom,
- a** nd you have relied on the soldiers  
 in your armies.
- 14The sound of war will be among  
 your people;
- a** ll your fortified cities will be  
 destroyed.
- I** t will be as when Shalman  
 destroyed Beth Arbel in battle,
- w** hen mothers were killed while  
 they were holding their children.
- 15That is what will be done to you,  
 you people of the city of Bethel,
- b** ecause of all the evil things you  
 have done.
- W** hen the battle begins at dawn,
- t** he king of Israel will be destroyed;  
 the enemy will kill him.”
- 11Yahweh says, “When the nation  
 of Israel was like a young man, I  
 loved him.
- H** e was like a son to me, whom I  
 called out of Egypt.
- 2But the more I called out to them,  
**t** he more they ran away.
- D** ay after day they offered their  
 sacrifices to the idols named Baal,
- a** nd they burned incense to honor  
 them.

- 3But it was I who taught them to do everything good, as a father teaches his son to walk.
- I** was like a father, holding them by their little arms.
- B**ut they did not understand that I was the one who was taking care of them.
- 4With kindness I guided them, with the tender cords of human kindness I led them.
- I** loved them so much that I guided them and led by my own hand.
- T**hey worked very hard, like a yoke of oxen pulling a plow, but I made their yoke light and loosened its weight on their jaws, so they did not suffer pain.
- 5But Israel will certainly return to Egypt,
- a**nd Assyria will certainly rule over them,
- b**ecause they refused to turn back to me and worship me as their God.
- 6Their enemies will attack Israel's cities with swords;
- t**heir enemies will destroy the bars that keep their gates closed and safe.
- T**heir enemies will destroy the people of Israel and put an end to all the plans they made.
- 7My people are determined to turn away from me.
- T**hey pretend to call out to me, the Most High God,
- b**ut I will allow no one to help them.
- 8But you people of Israel—dear Israel—I cannot abandon you.
- I** cannot give you over to your enemies.
- I** do not want to act toward you as I acted toward Admah or make you like Zeboyim—
- c**ities that I destroyed along with Sodom.
- I** have changed my mind about punishing you;
- I** earnestly long to have mercy on you.
- 9I have decided not to punish you severely.
- I** do not want to destroy you, the people of my Israel, whom I love.
- H**uman beings would easily decide to do that,
- b**ut I am God, not human.
- I** am the Holy One who lives among you;

- I** will not come to you and be angry with you.
- 10They will live their lives following my commands.
- I** will roar like a lion.
- A**nd when I roar, my people will hear and will come trembling.
- T**hey will come back to me from far away—
- f**rom the west they will come back to me.
- 11They will come fluttering into the land
- l**ike a flock of birds coming up from Egypt.
- A**nd some will be like pigeons that fly in from Assyria.
- I** will let them live in their own homes once more, in the land of Israel.
- I**, Yahweh, have promised this.”
- 12“The people of Israel have continually lied to me.
- B**ut the people of Judah they still obey me and are faithful to me, the Holy One.”
- 12The people of Israel do only what is useless;
- t**hey do only things that will destroy them.
- T**hey tell more and more lies; they do more and more acts of violence.
- T**hey make a treaty with Assyria,
- a**nd they send olive oil to Egypt,
- t**o persuade those nations to protect them.
- 2Yahweh is also accusing the people of Judah of breaking his covenant.
- H**e will punish those descendants of Jacob for what they have done.
- H**e will pay them back; he will give them what they deserve.
- 3When Jacob was in his mother’s womb, he grabbed his brother Esau’s heel because he wanted to take his brother’s place and be the firstborn.
- W**hen Jacob grew up, he wrestled with God.
- 4When the angel appeared to him, he struggled with him and won.
- J**acob cried out to the angel and begged him to bless him.
- J**acob found Yahweh at Bethel;
- i**t was there that Yahweh spoke with him.

- 5 This is Yahweh, the God of the angel armies!
- “ Yahweh” is the name by which we should worship him.
- 6 Turn to your God!
- O bey his covenant and do what is right.
- N ever stop trusting in your God for him to help you.
- 7 The merchants are wicked; they use scales that give wrong weights and measures,
- s o they can cheat those who buy from them.
- 8 The people of Israel boast,
- “ We are very rich,
- a nd we have found ways to make ourselves even more wealthy than we are now.
- I n all our buying and selling, no one can see anything wrong in what we do.”
- 9 But Yahweh says, “I am Yahweh, whom you should worship;
- I am the one who brought your ancestors out of Egypt.
- I will force you away from your homes and make you live in tents again,
- j ust as when you live in tents for a few days every year
- w hen you celebrate the Festival of Shelters.
- 10 Many times I spoke to the prophets and gave them messages, for them to give to you;
- a nd I gave them many visions for you,
- a nd I gave them parables, for them to speak to you.”
- 11 The prophet says that if it is true that the people in the region of Gilead are wicked,
- t hen surely they are also worthless!
- I n Gilgal they kill bulls and offer them to their idols;
- b ut these altars will be pulled down and turned into piles of stones in their fields.
- 12 Jacob fled to the land of Aram;
- h e, whose name God would later change to Israel, worked many years so he could marry a woman.
- H e took care of his uncle’s sheep in order to marry her.
- 13 Yahweh used the prophet Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt,

- a** nd he took care of them by the prophet who led them.
- 14The people of Israel have caused Yahweh to become very angry;
- t** heir Lord says that they are guilty of the death of many, and that their guilt remains on them.
- H** e will pay them back because they have insulted him with their shameful deeds.
- 13Yahweh says, “When the leaders of Israel spoke, the people trembled;
- t** hey were respected in Israel.
- B** ut because they all worshiped Baal, they became guilty,
- a** nd they died.
- 2Now they sin more and more;
- t** hey make cast metal figures out of silver
- t** o make them their idols.
- T** hose idols are statues that are very cleverly made,
- b** ut those statues are made only by craftsmen.
- B** ut other people see
- t** hat the men of Israel sacrifice to these calf-idols and kiss them to worship them.
- 3So the people of Israel will disappear
- a** s quickly as the clouds that form in the morning,
- a** s quickly as the dew, when the sun dries it up.
- T** hey will disappear as easily as the chaff that the wind blows away from the threshing place.
- T** hey will disappear as easily as the smoke that goes out of the chimney.
- 4But I am Yahweh, whom you should worship;
- I** am the one who brought you out of the land of Egypt.
- Y** ou must worship no other God; you must worship only Me.
- T** here is no one else who can rescue you.
- 5I took charge of you in the wilderness,
- i** n a desert where there was no water to drink.
- 6When I provided food for you,
- y** ou ate as much as you wanted and were satisfied.
- B** ut when you were no longer hungry, you became proud

- a** nd forgot about me.
- 7So I will attack you like a lion;
- I** will attack you like a leopard that waits beside the road to suddenly jump on a traveler.
- 8I will come against you like a female bear when someone steals her cubs,
- a** nd I will rip open your chests.
- L** ike a lion that attacks—
- a** s a wild animal would tear you apart.
- 9You people of Israel, I will destroy you.
- N** o one will be able to help you.
- 10You no longer have any king
- w** ho can save you in any of your cities.
- Y** ou no longer have any of the rulers whom you asked me to give you.
- 11When I gave you a king, I gave him to you because I was angry with you.
- A** nd because I was angry with you, I took your kings away.
- 12I have kept track of all the wicked deeds that you people of Israel have committed; I have recorded all your guilt.
- 13You are like a baby ready to be born,
- b** ut you are foolish,
- b** ecause you are like a child who refuses to be born.
- 14Will I really keep you from dying?
- W** ill I rescue you from dying?
- N** o! I will let you die
- I** will let you perish.
- I** have no more compassion left for you.”
- 15The prophet Hosea says: “Even though you people of Israel are wealthier than those of Judah,
- t** he day is coming when Yahweh will destroy you.
- Y** ou will meet disaster.
- Y** our enemies will take everything valuable away from you.
- 16The people of the city of Samaria are guilty because they have rebelled against God.

- T** heir enemies will kill them with swords.
- t** hey will throw their children far down to the ground and kill them;
- t** hey will rip open their pregnant women.”
- 14Israel, return to Yahweh your God!
- Y** ou have sinned because you have done wicked things.
- 2So now, return to Yahweh, and think about how you will confess your sins to him.
- S** ay this to him:
- “ Take away all our sins,
- a** nd accept us; please be kind to us.
- P** lease accept us back, so that we may praise you in our words and song.
- 3Assyria cannot save us.
- I** t is useless for us to ride horses into battle.
- W** e will never again say, ‘You are our gods’
- t** o the idols we have made with our own hands.
- E** ven children with no fathers look to you, Yahweh, and they find that you are kind to them.”
- 4Yahweh says, “I will forgive these people for having stopped honoring me;
- I** will love them without ceasing,
- b** ecause I have decided to stop being angry at them.
- 5I will help the people of Israel as the dew helps the ground.
- T** hey will prosper like the lilies bloom.
- T** hey will become as strong as the cedar trees in Lebanon.
- 6They will be like trees whose branches spread out.
- T** hey will be as beautiful as the olive trees,
- a** nd they will please others as much as the fragrant cedar trees in Lebanon.
- 7They will return and live under the protection that Israel has from me;
- I** will protect them from hardship.
- T** hey will be successful like a field of grain that grows well, like grapevines that are growing well.

**T**hey will become as famous as the wine that people produce in the land of Lebanon.

**8**You people of Israel, I will completely stop you from worshipping idols.

**I**t is I, Yahweh, who will take care of you. No idol can do that.

**I** am like a cypress tree that grows and stays fresh the entire year;

**a**ll your good gifts come from me.”

**9**Every wise person will understand the things about which I have written;

**t**hose who have understanding will study these things and pay careful attention to them.

**T**he way in which Yahweh wants us to live is right.

**T**hose who do what is right live by them.

**T**he rebellious people, however, sin, unable to obey him.