

Hosea

Hosea was one of four great 8th century prophets. He began his prophecy before the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, in about 716 BCE. Much of Hosea's prophecy is in biographical and autobiographical prose.

Having been preceded by Amos who spoke of judgment, Hosea speaks of the need for social change, being assured that retribution will come. Change must take place to prevent this divine retribution. Two key words appear in Hosea: *dsx* "faithful love" and *~yhla t[ʔd* "knowledge of God." These two describe God's covenant relationship. Faithful love is a loyalty and devotion that may be expected in a love relationship. Knowing God means much more than intellectual apprehension. It is knowledge that only comes with a personal relationship.

Hosea's oracles are brief, pointed and simple. They appear to be the observations of a country man who is concerned with wild and domestic animals, details of agriculture, weather, wind and rain. None the less he is keenly aware of the hazards of life and is knowledgeable about political conditions and the dangers of foreign alliances.

As the result of his own marriage Hosea could see most clearly the fearful dilemma of human evil. Thus he reports his observations around the events of his marriage to his wife, Gomer. Intervention is assuredly needed. Someone who loves sinners in spite of their sin must break the deadly process and by grace create a possible new beginning.

How is one to understand Hosea's marriage? At least five different interpretations have prevailed over the centuries: 1. Allegorical interpretation. 2. Literal interpretation. 3. "Harlot" is used in a proleptic manner. (Some scholars seek to present an 'apologia' for Gomer.) 4. Covenant love: kept, lost, regained. 5. Romantic: Hosea becomes the discoverer of divine love. Interestingly, Thomas Aquinas and others interpreted Gomer as being a concubine, not his wife, though it clearly states that Gomer was taken to be his wife. 1:3.

The book falls naturally into two sections: 1-3 The condemnation of social conditions. 4-14 a summary of the resulting situation. Hosea points out the problems as follows: 1. Israel and the fertility cults. 2. Political instability. 3. Breaking covenant love.

Some scholars feel that chapters 4-13 circulated prior to the addition of 1-3 & 14 which were added later. No manuscript evidence supports this though it is possible that the internal evidence points in that direction. Scholars are divided as to whether the book was written by one person or whether several writers added to the compilation of the book.

While the Hebrew text seems not to be well preserved, the LXX and Syriac provide no great help in solving textual problems, having been based, substantially, on the MT.

Hosea

<CHAPTER 1>

1 Hosea's domestic experiences and their effect 1:1 - 3:5

A Hosea's wife and children 1:1-9

1 Superscription 1:1

¹ The word ¹ of the Lord that came to Hosea ² the son of Beeri ³ during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah and during the reign of Jeroboam the son of Joash [king] of Israel.

2 Hosea's marriage 1:2-9

a Gomer, a mother of harlotries 1:2-3

² This is the beginning of the Lord's speaking through Hosea. The Lord said to Hosea, "Go, marry a wife of harlotry ⁴ and have children of harlotry for the land commits great harlotry ⁵ by forsaking ⁶ the Lord." ³ So he went and took Gomer, ⁷ the daughter of Diblaim, ⁸ and she conceived and gave birth to a son.

b The first child 1:3-5

⁴ And the Lord said to him, "Name him Jezreel: ⁹ for I will soon punish ¹⁰ the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel and I will put an end to the monarchy of the house of Israel. ⁵ And on that day I will break the power ¹¹ of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

c The second child 1:6-7

⁶ Gomer had a second child, a daughter, and the Lord said to him: "Call her Lo-ruhamah ¹² for I will no longer have love (*or, compassion*) ¹³ on the house of Israel nor forgive them any more. ⁷ But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by means of the sword, nor by war, nor by infantry nor by cavalry." ¹⁴

1 Hebrew: **8w\$** LXX: αρχη λογου κυριου Literally: "The beginning of the Lord's speaking."

2 The name means "to save" or "to deliver." Cf. Numbers 18:16.

3 The name means "my will."

4 Literally: "A woman of harlotries." Harlotry is often used in the Old Testament as spiritual unfaithfulness.

5 TAN: "the land will stray." Literally "whore away." J B Phillips "wholesale prostitution."

6 Literally: "from following after."

7 The name means "completion."

8 The name means "fig cakes." Possibly simply a worshiper of Baal since fig cakes were used as sacrificial gifts. NEB: "a worthless woman."

9 The name means: "The Lord sows."

10 Literally: "visit the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu."

11 Literally: "bow." Cf. I Kings 21:21; II Kings 9:15-10:14.

12 Literally: "unloved" or "unaccepted."

13 LXX: ανατιτασσομενος "I will surely become their enemy."

14 Probable reading found in the MT.

d The third child 1:8-9

8 After weaning Lo-ruhamah she again become pregnant and gave birth to a son. 9 Then the Lord said: "Name him Lo-ammi¹⁵ for you are strangers and I am not your God."¹⁶

B Restoration and renewal 1:10-2:1 [H. 2:1-2]¹⁷

10 [H2:1] Nevertheless, the Israelites will become as countless as the sands of the sea and instead of being told: "You are strangers," it will be declared to them that they are "Children of the living God. 11 [H2:2] And the people of both Judah and Israel will assemble, reunited and they will appoint one head over themselves; and they will rise up from the land, for the day of Jezreel will be great!

<CHAPTER 2>

1 [H2:3] Call to your brother,¹⁸ Ammi (*or, My people*) and your sister,¹⁹ Ruhamah (*or, beloved, obtained pity*).

C Repentance and rebetrothal 2:2-23 [H2:4-25]

1 Unfaithfulness born of ignorance 2:2-8 [H2:4-10]

2[H2:4] "Protest with your mother: rebuke ---
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband ---
that she remove her prostitution from her thoughts
and her seduction from between her breasts,²⁰
3[H2:5] or else I will strip her naked,²¹
and expose her as she was on the day of her birth
and make her to be desolate
and make her to be like a parched desert,
to let her die of thirst.²²
4[H2:6] Nor will I have any pity for her children,
because they are the children of a prostitute,
4[H2:7] since their mother was a prostitute;²³
who conceived them, having no shame.
For she said, 'I keep on following my lovers,
who will supply me with my bread and drink,
wool and linen (*literally: flax*) and perfume.'²⁴

15 The name means "stranger."

16 So: LXX & some Hebrew manuscripts. Hebrew: "I will not be yours."

17 Verses and chapter divisions in the Hebrew Bible differ from the English versions. Thus [H] signifies the Hebrew numbering.

18 So: LXX. Hebrew: plural.

19 So: LXX. Hebrew: plural.

20 Possibly a reference to an amulet or some symbol to declare that she was soliciting.

21 Cf. Genesis 38:24; Leviticus 21:9.

22 Cf. Nuzer Tablet N444:19-23; HV71:34-35. These speak of driving the unfaithful wife from the house naked. *Biblical Archaeologist* III.1 February 1940 pp. 1-12.

23 Some scholars delete this line as a gloss. An alternative translation could be: "they are as shameless as their mother, a prostitute."

24 In Hebrew the word translated perfume is: *ywQv* which normally would mean something to drink but since drink is in the

6[H2:8] Assuredly, I will place obstacles in (*or, fence*) her²⁵ path with thorn bushes
and I will erect a wall²⁶ against her,
so that her way will be blocked.

7[H2:9] Let her pursue her lovers as she wishes,
but she will not catch them;
but let her seek them!
She will not find them.
Then she will say, 'I will go,
returning to my first husband,
for I fared better with him than now.'

8[H2:10] "It never occurred to her
that it was I who gave her
the new grain, the new wine, and the oil,
and it was I who lavished silver on her,
and gold [which was used²⁷ for images for Baal worship.]²⁸

2 *The punishment fits the crime 2:9-13 [H2:11-15]*

9[H2:11] "Assuredly I will plunder (*or, despoil*)
my new grain at the proper time
as well as my new wine;
and I will snatch away my wool and linen (*or, flax*)
which were given to cover her nakedness.

10[H2:12] Now I will expose her shame
in the sight of her lovers
(*or, I will show her lovers
how disgusting she is*),
and no one will rescue her from my hand.²⁹

11[H2:13] I will bring an end to all her pleasures,
her festivals, her new moons, her Sabbaths,³⁰
and all her appointed solemnities."

12[H2:14] "I will also destroy her vines and her fig trees
of which she said,
'These are the payment³¹ for my services
given me by my lovers.'

previous stich this translation seems more appropriate. Some scholars feel verses 8 & 9 have been misplaced and would be better to insert them after verse 13.

25 So: LXX. Hebrew: "your."

26 Literally: "her wall so that."

27 An alternate translation would be: "made into the Baal."

28 Some scholars feel this is an aside and was a later addition.

29 Again a possible aside.

30 Literally: "full moons."

31 Hebrew: %1;! Perhaps "love reward." There is an assonance between this word and the Hebrew word for "tree" *htmatw*. The thought is not that of a dignified stately forest but rather of brushwood. LXX reads: εἰς μαρτυριον which is an emendation.

I will turn them into a jungle
so that the wild animals of the field will devour them.³²

13[H2:15] And I will punish her for the festival days of the Baalim
when she offered incense (*or, sacrifices*) to them,
and decked herself with nose rings and necklaces,
forgetting me, declares the Lord."

3 *Restoration and rebethrothal 2:14-23 [H2:16-25]*

a *Invitation and response 2:14-15 [H2:16-17]*

14[H2:16] "Take note most assuredly! I will coax her
and bring her through the wilderness,³³
and speak to her tenderly.

15[H2:17] There I will give back her vineyards,
and make the valley of Achor (*or, Trouble Valley*)³⁴
a door of hope."³⁵

"And there³⁶ she will respond³⁷ as in the days of her youth,
as at the time when she came up from the land of Egypt."

b *Cleansing and rebetrothal 2:16-20 [H2:18-22]*

16[H2:18] "And in that day," declares the Lord, "you³⁸ will call me, 'My husband (*or, my Lord*)'
and you will no longer call me 'My master (*or, Baal*).'³⁹ 17[H2:19] For I will remove the names of the
Baalim from her mouth and they will never be mentioned (*or, remembered*) by name again.

18[H2:20] "And I will make a covenant with you,⁴⁰ and also at that time with the wild animals
of the field, the birds of the air and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish (*or, banish*)⁴¹
the bow and the sword (*or, all armaments*) and war from the land; and I will let people rest in safety
(*or, security*). 19[H2:21] Also, I will take you as my wife (*or, I will betroth you to me*); accepting you as
my wife in righteousness,⁴² justice, constant love and mercy. 20[H2:22] I will take you as my wife in
faithfulness; and you will know the Lord."

c *Favor and blessing 2:21-23 [H2:23-25]*

21[H2:23] "And in that day," says the Lord,
"I will respond to the heavens

32 LXX has: Καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὰ ἑρπετὰ τῆς γῆς.

33 I.e. "her savage land."

34 A desolate region. Cf. Isaiah 65:10; Joshua 7:25-26. Possibly one of the gorges near Jericho.

35 Hebrew uncertain. Possibly "a plowed land of hope."

36 Literally: "from there." Some scholars emend `vm to read ytmXw "I will make." This, however destroys the rhythmic balance of the verse.

37 Hebrew possibly means "suffer" or "be satisfied."

38 MT: "them" LXX: "they" Emended: "she."

39 The name of a Canaanite god. Another meaning of the word might be "husband."

40 Hebrew: "them."

41 Hebrew: "break."

42 I.e. instead of a "bridal price" I will give you acceptance. This becomes the bridal price paid by the bridegroom. He will confer these qualities on her, so that she will never offend again.

(or, I will command the heavens)
and they will respond to the earth.
22[H2:24] And the earth will produce new grain,
wine and oil
and they will be the answer to Jezreel:⁴³
23[H2:25] and I will sow him⁴⁴ for myself in the Lord,
and I will have pity on Lo-ruhamah (or, *unloved or unaccepted*),
and I will say to Lo-ammi (or, *stranger*),
you are my people
and he will say, 'You are my God.'

<CHAPTER 3>

D The redemption of the adulterous wife 3:1-5

1 The Lord said to me, "Go once more (or, *again*)⁴⁵ and love the woman⁴⁶ who is beloved by a paramour and is an adulteress; just as the Lord loves the people of Israel,⁴⁷ though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.⁴⁸ 2 So I bought her (or, *got her back*) for fifteen shekels of silver, and an homer and a lethech of barley.⁴⁹ 3 And I stipulated to her: "You must dwell as mine for a long time; with no fornication or marriage even though I will not cohabit with you, for I on my part will leave you alone."⁵⁰ 4 For the Israelites will live for a long time without a king or prince, without sacrifice⁵¹ or cult pillars,⁵² without ephod⁵³ or teraphim.⁵⁴ 5 Later on the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and they will be in awe of the Lord and of his goodness in the days to come.

<CHAPTER 4>

II Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh 4:1-13:16

A Spiritual unfaithfulness 4:1-7:7

1 Ephraim is joined to idols 4:1-19

a The Lord's controversy with his people 4:1-3

1 Hear the Word of the Lord, O people of Israel, for the Lord has an indictment (or, a

43 I.e. "God sows" which is the meaning of Jezreel.

44 So: emended. Hebrew: "her."

45 Scholars have questioned the syntax of the Hebrew word שׁוּב = again. Does it mean he should find another woman who has been a prostitute or does it refer to Gomer? The MT and the early versions clearly refer to Gomer. It can, using the early understanding, be translated as: "Go on loving" or "Go again, love a woman" which implies the woman being Gomer. That Hosea loved another woman hardly seems tenable. This is supported by the LXX with word $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu$.

46 Literally: "companion."

47 Israel is the customary public parallel word to Jacob.

48 Meaning uncertain. Cakes of raisins were given to the fertility goddess Astarte as well as other fertility cults.

49 Scholars do not agree on the size of an homer. Sizes range from 3.8 to 6.5 bushels. The basic amount was that which an ass could carry as a normal load. The amount designated by the Hebrew word "lethech" is only a guess. The Hebrew word is unknown. The LXX: $\nu\epsilon\beta\epsilon\lambda\ \sigma\iota\nu\upsilon\upsilon$ = "a jar of wine" which is based on a variant of the text. The Hebrew is equally unintelligible: 9wU -w1 Tradition says that a lethech is equal of a half homer.

50 The force of the Hebrew words seem to imply: "you will not have marital relationships, nor will I be a husband to you." There are minor questions about the last words of the text.

51 A possible emendation would be "altar."

52 A standing stone or stele regarded as the home of a deity. In later usage it became a monument to an important event.

53 A vestment worn by a god or a priest.

54 The god of the property. In the story of Rachel taking the teraphim from her father's house Genesis 31:19-42 she had taken the equivalent of the title to the family property.

grievance) against the inhabitants of the land because there is no fidelity (*or, honesty*),⁵⁵ mercy⁵⁶ nor knowledge (*or, obedience*) of God in the land!

2 But there is perjury, dishonesty, murder, theft and adultery,
there are no moral limits!

3 This is why the earth is arid,
and everything living therein languishes---
the animals of the field,
even the birds of the sky ---
and the fish of the sea perish (*or, disappear*).⁵⁷

b A corrupt priesthood and a corrupt people 4:4-15

4 Yet let no one protest (*or, find fault*),
and let no one accuse (*or, condemn*).
because of my grievance⁵⁸ with you, O priests.

5 You have stumbled by day,
and at night the prophets⁵⁹ also will stumble as well;
and I will destroy your mother.⁶⁰

6 My people perish for want of understanding!
Since you have rejected knowledge (*or, obedience*)
I will reject you as my priest;
and because you have forgotten the teaching of your God
I also will spurn your children.

7 The more they have grown in numbers
the more they have sinned against me.
I will exchange their dignity for dishonor.

8 They feed on the sin offering of my people;
they are greedy about the guilt to come.

9 Therefore the people will fare like the priests;
I will punish them for their conduct
and repay them for their deeds.

10 They will eat, but they will not be satisfied;
they will commit adultery but have no children,
because they have abandoned⁶¹ the Lord
to devote themselves to lust.⁶²

55 Literally: "truth."

56 Literally: "loyalty."

57 Literally: "are taken away."

58 So: LXX. Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "your people are like those who contend with a priest." Numerous emendations have been suggested. Some suggest: "for my people are like their idol-priest", or "my children are like their priest."

59 A suggested emendation reads: "your children."

60 Grammar allows: "and you are destroying your mother."

61 Literally: "forsaken."

62 Verse 10 possibly is conjoined with verse 11. Then it would be translated: "because they have forsaken the Lord to observe lust (or, harlotry), wine and...."

11 Old and new wine
deprive them of understanding.⁶³
12 O my people! By consulting a piece of wood for advice,⁶⁴
and their divining rod for oracles,⁶⁵
they have a lecherous spirit that has led them astray
and they have forsaken their God to commit harlotry.⁶⁶
13 On the mountain tops they offer sacrifices
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oaks, poplars and willows (*or, terebinth*);
because of their pleasant shade.

That is why your daughters (*or, daughter-in-laws*) fornicate,
and your married women⁶⁷ are adulteresses.
14 I will not punish your daughters for their fornication (*or, prostitution*),
nor your married women when they commit adultery,
since the men themselves consort⁶⁸ with prostitutes,
and sacrifice with cult prostitutes.
It is no surprise that people who are without understanding
will be brought to ruin.

15 Though you may play the harlot, O Israel,
do not let Judah⁶⁹ incur (*or, share*) guilt.⁷⁰
Do not enter Gilgal,⁷¹
nor even Bethaven,⁷²
and take an oath, saying, "As the Lord lives."

c Israel a stubborn heifer 4:16

16 Israel has been as obstinate
as a stubborn heifer.
How can the Lord feed them
like a lamb in a large pasture?
{*or, Now the Lord will pasture them
like a lamb in a large field.*}

d Idolatry of Ephraim and its effect 4:17-19

63 Literally: "heart."

64 Literally: "phallus."

65 Hebrew uncertain. NEB: "take orders from a fetish."

66 Literally: "because of their prostitution they have left their God."

67 Literally: "brides."

68 Hebrew uncertain.

69 Some scholars feel "Judah" is a later addition.

70 NEB: "Bring no guilt offerings, Israel."

71 A site north of Bethel or possibly a site in the south. Cf. Joshua 4:19 f.

72 Literally the name means "home of delusion," possibly because the site became a substitute for Bethel. Some Manuscripts include [never make an oath at Beersheba.]

- 17 Ephraim is joined to idols,⁷³
 let him alone.⁷⁴
- 18 When their drinking is ended they resort to sexual orgies,⁷⁵
 they⁷⁶ love disgrace more than glory.⁷⁷
- 19 A wind has (*or, will have*) taken them away⁷⁸
 and they will be ashamed because of their altars.⁷⁹

<CHAPTER 5>

2 Treachery of Ephraim 5:1-7

a An indictment of the leaders of Israel 5:1-2

- 1 Hear this you priests!
 Pay attention, O house⁸⁰ of Israel!
 Listen, O royal house!
 This judgment pertains to you;
 for you have been a hunter's snare at Mizpah,⁸¹
 and have been a net spread out over Tabor.⁸²
- 2 And have dug a deep pit⁸³ in Acacia⁸⁴
 but I will punish all of them (*or, I am the hunter*).⁸⁵
 [*or: They have been the cause of their sinking into evil
 and I will punish all of them.*]

b A brood of strange children 5:3-7

- 3 I have known Ephraim,⁸⁶
 and Israel⁸⁷ has not escaped my notice;
 for now, O Ephraim, you have been playing the harlot.
 Israel has defiled itself.
- 4 Their misdeeds cause them to be barred
 from returning to their God.
 Because of their lecherous spirit within them

73 The Hebrew word could be translated "bewitched."

74 Hebrew uncertain. This Hebrew poetry does not have the rhythmical form in the last line, prompting the suggestion by scholars that the verse should read: "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him with his band (or tribe) plunder."

75 Hebrew unintelligible. So: emended. LXX: εκ φρουραγματος αυτης.

76 Literally: "their shields."

77 Emended to be more like the LXX. The Hebrew is uncertain. Possibly, scholars say, an extra line has been inserted.

78 Literally: "has bound up in the corners of her garments."

79 So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "sacrifices."

80 Some scholars emend to read "prophets."

81 The name means "watch tower." Several sites were called Mizpah, the most important one being on the boundary between Israel and Judah. It is also possible that Mizpah was a town in Transjordan.

82 A mountain height located at the south end of the valley of Jezreel, dominating virtually the entire valley.

83 Hebrew: rjXh tX So: emended. Hebrew uncertain. MT literally: "through slaughterer (or, waded deeply into slaughter) they have sunk deep in evil deeds."

84 Traditionally called "Shittim." An unfruitful valley where only acacia trees grow.

85 Hebrew unclear. Some scholars make a slight emendation to translate: "they have no correction (or instructor)." LXX: παιδε αυτος.

86 The name means "double fruitful." Ephraim was one of the twelve tribes but here the reference is to the northern kingdom of Israel which existed from about 922 to 722 B. C. E.

87 The name means "God strives."

they pay no attention to the Lord.
 5 The arrogance of Israel testifies against it,
 the guilt of Ephraim⁸⁸ will be its downfall.
 Judah also will fall with them.
 6 With their flocks and herds they will go
 in search of the Lord,⁸⁹
 but they will not find him;
 for He has cast them off.⁹⁰
 7 They have been unfaithful to the Lord;
 for they have⁹¹ borne illegitimate⁹² children.
 Now the new moon will devour them along
 with portions of their fields.⁹³

3 Warfare between Ephraim and Judah 5:8-6:6
a Yahweh (or, The Lord) is a devouring lion 5:8-14

8 Sound the ram's horn in Gibeah,⁹⁴
 the trumpet in Ramah.⁹⁵
 Sound the alarm in Bethaven;⁹⁶
 tremble,⁹⁷ O Benjamin!
 9 Ephraim will become a desolate waste land
 in the day of punishment;
 among the tribes of Israel
 I announce what is a certainty:
 10 The rulers of Judah have acted
 like those who have shifted the ancient property lines.
 I will vent my wrath
 on them like a flood!
 11 Ephraim has defrauded and robbed others of redress
 because he was determined to do his own will.⁹⁸
 12 Therefore I am like a festering sore⁹⁹ to Ephraim

88 MT : "Israel and Ephraim."

89 I. e. to offer sacrifices.

90 Hebrew uncertain. Since verses 5 & 6 would read well following 5:15 some scholars feel it is out of place at this point and should be inserted following 5:15. There is no manuscript evidence to support this.

91 So emended. MT: "he has."

92 Literally: "strange."

93 Hebrew uncertain. Various emendations have been suggested such as "the destroyer" or "the sirocco."

94 A hill located in the territory of Benjamin, four miles north of Jerusalem. In later years it was a fortified position.

95 The word means "a high place." A town on the border of Israel and Judah. There are other sites that also were called Ramah but the site on the border of Israel and Judah seems most logical.

96 The name means "house of nothingness." There were three towns in the tribe of Benjamin. These were being wrested from Israel by Judah. There seems to be a bit of a play on words: Bethel = "the house of God" has become "a house of nothingness."

97 So: emended to be similar to the LXX reading *arx* for *šyrxt* MT: "after you" or possibly "look behind you, O Benjamin."

98 Hebrew uncertain. So: LXX & Targums. Hebrew: "to command." Some manuscripts use "nothingness."

99 S. R. Driver translates this as "pus" rather than "moth."

and like dry rot¹⁰⁰ in the house of Judah.¹⁰¹
 13 When Ephraim saw his infirmity (*or, ailment*),
 and Judah his sores (*or, ulcers*),
 Ephraim turned to Assyria,¹⁰²
 and sent (*a message*) to the great king.¹⁰³
 But he has not been able to cure you
 or heal your sores.
 14 So: I will be like a lion to Ephraim
 and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
 I, myself, will attack and strike:
 and will carry off the prey, and none will be able to rescue it.

b Israel's shallow repentance 5:15-6:3

15 I will return again to my abode
 until they realize¹⁰⁴ their guilt¹⁰⁵ and seek my face.
 In their misery they will seek me and beg for my favor.

<CHAPTER 6 >

1 Come, let us turn back to the Lord;
 for it is he who attacked, but will also heal us;
 he has wounded¹⁰⁶ and he will bind up our wounds.
 2 In two days he will revive us;
 on the third day he will restore us;¹⁰⁷
 and we will live in his presence (*or, under his care*).
 3 Let us pursue obedience to the Lord;
 for he will appear as certainly as daybreak (*or, dawn*);¹⁰⁸
 he will come as surely as the winter rains,
 and like the spring rain that refreshes the earth."¹⁰⁹

c Mercy, not sacrifice 6:4-6

4 O Ephraim! How can I deal with you?
 How can I deal with you, O Judah?
 Your goodness (*or, love*)¹¹⁰ is like a morning haze,

100 NRSV: "maggots." Peshitta: "tempest."

101 The figures "pus" and "dry rot" signify a gradual process of corruption and decay. Some translators emend Judah to be Israel.

102 This nation was first ruled by Asher, later by Nineveh. It was a powerful nation from 859 - 614 B. C. E.

103 I. e. the king of Assyria who had received that title. So: emended. Hebrew: "a king that will contend" or "an avenging king."

104 Possibly: "bear the punishment."

105 LXX: αφανισθωσιν. Alternative readings are suggested by scholars.

106 Literally: "struck us down."

107 Literally: "raise us up."

108 Hebrew can possibly be emended. LXX: ευρησομεν αυτον. Several other emendations have been suggested.

109 LXX: προιμος και οφιμος τη γη. This can be translated "as the spring rain and the early winter rain to the earth.": NRSV translates a slight emendation. Some scholars change the order of this stich to make a more logical sequence.

110 Literally: "loving kindness."

disappearing as does the early morning dew.
5 For this reason I sent warnings by the prophets;¹¹¹
I have killed them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment strikes like lightning.¹¹²
6 For it is constant love that I desire, not sacrifice.
I would rather have obedience (*or, knowledge*)
of God than burnt sacrifice.

4 A record of villainy and apostasy 6:7-7:2
a Murder and robbery 6:7-9

7 But they have transgressed the covenant of Adam
and have dealt falsely with me.
8 Gilead¹¹³ is a city of evildoers
with a trail of blood (*or, bloody are their tracks*).
9 Bandits lie in ambush,¹¹⁴
and the priests have ganged together;¹¹⁵
they even murder on the way to Shechem.¹¹⁶
Yes, they have encouraged depravity!
(*or, They certainly are criminals.*)

b A sickness beyond cure 6:10-7:2

10 In the sanctuary of Israel¹¹⁷ I have witnessed a horrible thing;
Ephraim has fornicated there. Israel has defiled himself.
11 For you also, O Israel, a harvest is inevitable!¹¹⁸

When would I restore the fortunes of my people?

<CHAPTER 7>

1 When I would make Israel whole,
the guilt of Ephraim would be exposed
and the wickedness of Samaria,
for they have acted treacherously
with thieves breaking in,
and bands of raiders plundering outside.

111 Hebrew unclear.

112 So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew unclear. Hebrew: "your judgment goes forth." Emended: "Therefore I have hewn tablets of stone and taught them by the words of my mouth."

113 The name means "hard, firm." An area east of the Jordan, south of the river Yarmuk and north of the river Jabbok. A grain producing area.

114 Hebrew uncertain. So: emended.

115 So: Syriac. Hebrew: "a company." An alternative translation could read: "as bandits who lie in wait for someone so is the confederacy of the priests."

116 Shechem means "shoulder." A town in the hill country of Ephraim located at the pass between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerazim.

117 An emendation suggests: "Beth-shean."

118 A possible emendation: "Even Judah has reaped a harvest of reckoning."

2 But they do not consider¹¹⁹
that I remember all their wicked deeds.
Now their evil deeds surround them;¹²⁰
they are always before me.

5 Reveling and intrigue 7:3-7

3¹²¹ By their wickedness they make¹²² the king¹²³ glad,
and their teaching entertains the officials.
4 They are all adulterers;¹²⁴
inside they are like a heated oven,¹²⁵
whose baker does not need to stoke the fire;
yet the kneaded dough is leavened.¹²⁶
5 From the day of becoming king, he and his officials
are overcome with drinking
while the king readily receives traitors.
6 Those who plot¹²⁷ are drawn near with hearts like ovens¹²⁸ within them.
Their angry passion smoldering all night
and in the morning it flares up like a flaming fire.¹²⁹
7 All of them are heated like an oven
and they consume their rulers;
king after king has fallen;
and none of them calls on me.

B Political unfaithfulness and instability 7:8-10:15

1 An indictment of Ephraim 7:8-16

a Ephraim's trust in foreign alliances 7:8-12

8 Ephraim has become involved with the nations.
Ephraim is like a half baked loaf of bread.¹³⁰
9 Foreigners have consumed (*or, sapped*) his strength,
and he is not aware of it;
his hair (*or, beard*)¹³¹ has become sprinkled with gray
and he does not take note.
10 [The arrogance of Israel testifies against (*or, humbles*) him;
yet despite this they do not return to the Lord their God,

119 Literally: "say in their hearts."

120 So: emended. Hebrew: "me."

121 These verses might be realigned to read: 4, 6, 3, 5.

122 Some scholars make an emendation reading wxXmy for wxmXy "In their wickedness they anoint kings."

123 LXX: "kings."

124 A possible emendation !ypna for ~ypanm "all of them are engaged."

125 A slight emendation of the MT.

126 Uncertain text. Many emendations have been suggested but none have gained wide acceptance.

127 Literally: "ambush."

128 So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "brought near."

129 Hebrew uncertain.

130 Hebrew uncertain.

131 Hebrew: "mouth."

or seek him in all this.] ¹³²

- 11 Ephraim has acted like a silly dove (*or, pigeon*),
a witless, foolish ¹³³ person:
now appealing to Egypt, then turning to Assyria.
12 When they fly by I will spread my net over them;
I will bring them down like birds of the air;
I will discipline them for their wicked deeds. ¹³⁴

b Ephraim's unfaithfulness to the Lord 7:13-16

- 13 Woe to them, for they are straying from me!
Ruin will come to them for rebelling against me!
I would have redeemed them,
but they plotted treason against me.

- 14 They have not cried to me from the heart,
but they have wailed on their beds.
They gash themselves ¹³⁵ for grain and wine;
they are faithless toward me.

- 15 Although I [trained them], ¹³⁶ I have strengthened their arms,
yet they have plotted evil against me.

- 16 They turn to Baal (*or, that which is of no value*). ¹³⁷

- They are like a defective bow.
Their officials fall by the sword
because of the stammering ¹³⁸ of their tongues.
This will be the result of their jabbering in the land of Egypt.

<CHAPTER 8>

2 Israel under sentence of death 8:1-14

a War's alarm 8:1-3

- 1 Put the trumpet (*or, ram's horn*) to your lips ¹³⁹
for one who is like a vulture ¹⁴⁰ is swooping

132 Some scholars feel this is a later addition.

133 Literally: "without heart."

134 Hebrew uncertain. So: emended. Hebrew "according to the report of their assembly." LXX: της θλιψεως αυτων. "I will chastise them by the fullness of their distress (or, overwhelming distress)."

135 Hebrew uncertain. So: LXX which is slight emendation. Another possibility based on Aramaic translates: "they debauch our grain and wine." Gashing themselves follows the ritual that was carried out for other gods.

136 Poetically this Hebrew word is additional and is omitted by the LXX.

137 Hebrew uncertain. So: emended. LXX reads: "they return to nothing."

138 So in Arabic.

139 Literally "palate."

140 Hebrew uncertain. If one Hebrew letter is omitted the word would be "Assyrian."