

# HOSEA

**1**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD OF THE LORD which came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel.

## Hosea's unfaithful wife

<sup>2</sup>THIS IS THE BEGINNING of the LORD's message by Hosea. He said, Go, take a wanton for your wife and get children of her wantonness; for like a wanton this land is unfaithful to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>So he went and took Gomer, a worthless woman [a worthless woman: *or* daughter of Diblaim]; and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said to him,

Call him Jezreel [*That is* God shall sow] for in a little while I will punish the line of Jehu for the blood shed in Jezreel and put an end to the kingdom of Israel.

<sup>5</sup>On that day

I will break Israel's bow in the Vale of Jezreel.

<sup>6</sup>She conceived again and bore a daughter, and the LORD said to him,

Call her Lo-ruhamah [*That is* Not loved];

for I will never again show love to Israel,

never again forgive them [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* <sup>7</sup>Then I will love Judah and will save them. I will save them not by bow or sword or weapon of war, by horses or by horsemen, but by the LORD their God].

<sup>8</sup>After weaning Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son; <sup>9</sup>and the LORD said,

Call him Lo-ammi [*That is* Not my people];

for you are not my people,

and I will not be your God.

<sup>10</sup>The Israelites shall become countless, as the sands of the sea which can neither be measured nor numbered; it shall no longer be said, 'They are not my people', they shall be called Sons of the Living God.

<sup>11</sup>Then the people of Judah and of Israel shall be reunited and shall choose for themselves a single head, and they shall become masters of the earth; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

**2**<sup>1</sup>Then you will say to your brothers, 'You are my people', and to your sisters, 'You are loved.'

<sup>2</sup>Plead my cause with your mother;

is she not my wife and I her husband? [*is she ... husband?: or for she is no longer my wife nor I her husband.*]

Plead with her to forswear those wanton looks, to banish the lovers from her bosom.

<sup>3</sup>Or I will strip her and expose her naked as the day she was born;

I will make her bare as the wilderness,  
parched as the desert,  
and leave her to die of thirst.

<sup>4</sup>I will show no love for her children;  
they are the offspring of wantonness,  
<sup>5</sup>and their mother is a wanton.

She who conceived them is shameless;  
she says, 'I will go after my lovers;  
they give me my food and drink,  
my wool and flax, my oil and my perfumes.'

<sup>6</sup>Therefore I will block her road with thorn-bushes  
and obstruct her path with a wall,  
so that she can no longer follow her old ways.

<sup>7</sup>When she pursues her lovers she will not overtake them,  
when she looks for them she will not find them;  
then she will say,

'I will go back to my husband again;  
I was better off with him than I am now.'

<sup>8</sup>For she does not know that it is I who gave her  
corn, new wine, and oil,  
I who lavished upon her silver and gold  
which they spent on the Baal.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore I will take back  
my corn at the harvest and my new wine at the vintage,  
and I will take away the wool and the flax  
which I gave her to cover her naked body;

<sup>10</sup>so I will show her up for the lewd thing she is,  
and no lover will want to steal her from me.

<sup>12</sup>[vv11 and 12 transposed] I will ravage the vines and the fig-trees,  
which she says are the fee  
with which her lovers have hired her,  
and turn them into jungle where wild beasts shall feed.

<sup>11</sup>I will put a stop to her merrymaking,  
her pilgrimages and new moons, her sabbaths [*Or her full moons*] and  
festivals.

<sup>13</sup>I will punish her for the holy days  
when she burnt sacrifices to the Baalim,  
when she decked herself with earrings and necklaces,  
ran after her lovers and forgot me.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>But now listen,  
I will woo her, I will go with her into the wilderness  
and comfort her:

<sup>15</sup>there I will restore her vineyards,  
turning the Vale of Trouble into the Gate of Hope [turning ... Hope: *or* Emek-  
achor to Pethah-tikvah],  
and there she will answer as in her youth,  
when she came up out of Egypt.

<sup>16</sup>On that day she shall call me 'My husband'  
and shall no more call me 'My Baal' [*Also means My husband*];  
<sup>17</sup>and I will wipe from her lips the very names of the Baalim;  
never again shall their names be heard.  
This is the very word of the LORD [*This ... LORD: transposed from after On  
that day in v16*].

<sup>18</sup>Then I will make a covenant on behalf of Israel with the wild beasts, the birds of the air, and the things that creep on the earth, and I will break bow and sword and weapon of war and sweep them off the earth, so that all living creatures may lie down without fear. <sup>19</sup>I will betroth you to myself for ever, betroth you in lawful wedlock with unfailing devotion and love; <sup>20</sup>I will betroth you to myself to have and to hold, and you shall know the LORD. <sup>21</sup>At that time I will give answer, says the LORD, I will answer for the heavens and they will answer for the earth, <sup>22</sup>and the earth will answer for the corn, the new wine, and the oil, and they will answer for Jezreel. <sup>23</sup>Israel shall be my new sowing in the land, and I will show love to Lo-ruhamah and say to Lo-ammi, 'You are my people', and he will say, 'Thou art my God.'

**3**<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to me,  
Go again and love a woman  
loved by another man, an adulteress,  
and love her as I, the LORD, love the Israelites  
although they resort to other gods  
and love the raisin-cakes offered to their idols.

<sup>2</sup>So I got her back [*got her back: or bought her*] for fifteen pieces of silver, a homer of barley and a measure of wine; <sup>3</sup>and I said to her,  
Many a long day you shall live in my house  
and not play the wanton,  
and have no intercourse with a man, not I with you.

<sup>4</sup>For the Israelites shall live many a long day  
without king or prince,  
without sacrifice or sacred pillar,  
without image or household gods;  
<sup>5</sup>but after that they will again seek  
the LORD their God and David their king,  
and turn anxiously to the LORD for his bounty in days to come.

## **God 's case against Israel**

**4**<sup>1</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O Israel;  
for the LORD has a charge to bring against the people of the land:  
There is no good faith or mutual trust,  
no knowledge of God in the land,  
<sup>2</sup>oaths are imposed and broken, they kill and rob;  
there is nothing but adultery and licence [*and licence: prob. rdg, Heb they  
exceed*],

one deed of blood after another.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore the land shall be dried up,  
and all who live in it shall pine away,  
and with them the wild beasts and the birds of the air;  
even the fish shall be swept from the sea.

<sup>4</sup>But it is not for any man to bring a charge,  
it is not for him to prove a case;  
the quarrel with you, false priest, is mine.

Priest? [the quarrel ... Priest?: *prob. rdg, Heb* and your people are like those  
who quarrel with a priest.] <sup>5</sup>By day and by night you blunder on,  
you and the prophet with you.

<sup>6</sup>My people are ruined for lack of knowledge;  
your own countrymen are brought to ruin [My people ... ruin: *or* Your mother  
(Israel) is destroyed, my people destroyed for lack of knowledge].  
You have rejected knowledge,  
and I will reject you from serving me as priest.  
You have forgotten the teaching of God,  
and I, your God, will forget your sons.

<sup>7</sup>The more priests there are, the more they sin against me;  
their dignity I will turn into dishonour.

<sup>8</sup>They feed on the sin of my people  
and batten on their iniquity.

<sup>9</sup>But people and priest shall be treated alike.  
I will punish them for their conduct  
and repay them for their deeds:

<sup>10</sup>they shall eat but never be satisfied,  
behave wantonly but their lust will never be overtaxed,  
for they have forsaken the LORD  
to give themselves <sup>11</sup>to sacred prostitution.

New wine and old steal my people's wits [*steal ... wits: or embolden my  
people*]:

<sup>12</sup>they ask advice from a block of wood  
and take their orders from a fetish;  
for a spirit of wantonness has led them astray  
and in their lusts they are unfaithful to their God.

<sup>13</sup>Your men sacrifice on mountain-tops  
and burn offerings on the hills,  
under oak and poplar  
and the terebinth's pleasant shade.

Therefore your daughters play the wanton  
and your sons' brides commit adultery.

<sup>14</sup>I will not punish your daughters for playing the wanton  
nor your sons' brides for their adultery,  
because your men resort to wanton women  
and sacrifice with temple-prostitutes.

A people without understanding comes to grief;

<sup>15</sup>they are a mother turned wanton.

Bring no guilt-offering [Bring no guilt-offering: *prob. rdg, Heb* Let him not be guilty], Israel;  
do not come to Gilgal, Judah,  
do not go up to Beth-aven to swear by the life of the LORD,  
<sup>16</sup>since Israel has run wild, wild as a heifer;  
and will the LORD now feed this people  
like lambs in a broad meadow?  
<sup>17</sup>Ephraim, keeping company with idols,  
<sup>18</sup>has held a drunken orgy [*a drunken orgy: prob. rdg, Heb unintelligible*],  
they have practised sacred prostitution,  
they have preferred dishonour to glory.  
<sup>19</sup>The wind shall sweep them away, wrapped in its wings,  
and they will find their sacrifices a delusion.

**5**<sup>1</sup>Hear this, you priests,  
and listen, all Israel; let the royal house mark my words.  
Sentence is passed on you;  
for you have been a snare at Mizpah,  
and a net spread out on Tabor.

<sup>2</sup>The rebels! they have shown base ingratitude,  
but I will punish them all.

<sup>3</sup>I have cared for Ephraim  
and I have not neglected Israel;  
but now Ephraim has played the wanton  
and Israel has defiled himself.

<sup>4</sup>Their misdeeds have barred their way back to their God;  
for a wanton spirit is in them,  
and they care nothing for the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>Israel's arrogance cries out against him;  
[*prob. rdg, Heb prefixes Israel*] Ephraim's guilt is his undoing,  
and Judah no less is undone.

<sup>6</sup>They go with sacrifices of sheep and cattle  
to seek the LORD, but do not find him.

He has withdrawn himself from them;

<sup>7</sup>for they have been unfaithful to him,  
and their sons are bastards.

Now an invader shall devour their fields.

<sup>8</sup>Blow the trumpet in Gibeah,  
the horn in Ramah,  
raise the battle-cry in Beth-aven:  
'Benjamin, we are with you!'

<sup>9</sup>On the tribes of Israel I have proclaimed this unalterable doom:  
on the day of punishment Ephraim shall be laid waste.

<sup>10</sup>The rulers of Judah act like men who move their neighbour's boundary;  
on them will I pour out my wrath like a flood.

<sup>11</sup>Ephraim is an oppressor trampling on justice,  
doggedly pursuing what is worthless.

<sup>12</sup>But I am a festering sore to Ephraim,

a canker to the house of Judah.

<sup>13</sup>So when Ephraim found that he was sick,  
Judah that he was covered with sores,  
Ephraim went to Assyria,  
he went in haste to the Great King;  
but he has no power to cure you  
or to heal your sores.

<sup>14</sup>Yes indeed, I will be fierce as a panther to Ephraim,  
fierce as a lion to Judah –  
I will maul the prey and go,  
carry it off beyond hope of rescue – I, the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>I will go away and return to my place  
until in their horror they seek me,  
and look earnestly for me in their distress.

**6**<sup>1</sup>Come, let us return to the LORD;  
for he has torn us and will heal us,  
he has struck us and he will bind up our wounds;

<sup>2</sup>after two days he will revive us,  
on the third day he will restore us,  
that in his presence we may live.

<sup>3</sup>Let us humble ourselves, let us strive to know the LORD,  
<sup>4</sup>*[Line transposed from end of v5]* whose justice dawns like morning light,  
and its dawning is as sure as the sunrise.  
It will come to us like a shower,  
like spring rains that water the earth.

<sup>4</sup>O Ephraim, how shall I deal with you?  
How shall I deal with you, Judah?  
Your loyalty to me is like the morning mist,  
like dew that vanishes early.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore have I lashed you through the prophets  
and torn you [*prob. rdg, Heb them*] to shreds with my words;

<sup>6</sup>loyalty is my desire, not sacrifice,  
not whole-offerings but the knowledge of God.

<sup>7</sup>At Admah [*At Admah: prob. rdg, Heb Like Adam*] they have broken my  
covenant,  
there they have played me false.

<sup>8</sup>Gilead is a haunt of evildoers,  
marked by a trail of blood;

<sup>9</sup>like robbers lying in wait for a man,  
priests are banded together  
to do murder on the road to Shechem;  
their deeds are outrageous.

<sup>10</sup>At Israel's sanctuary I have seen a horrible thing:  
there Ephraim played the wanton  
and Israel defiled himself.

<sup>11</sup>And for you, too, Judah, comes a harvest of reckoning.

When I would reverse the fortunes of my people,

<sup>7</sup>when I would heal Israel,  
then the guilt of Ephraim stands revealed,  
and all the wickedness of Samaria;  
they have not kept faith.

They are thieves, they break into houses [*houses: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*];  
they are robbers, they strip people in the street,

<sup>2</sup>little thinking that I have their wickedness ever in mind.  
Now their misdeeds beset them  
and stare me in the face.

<sup>3</sup>They win over the king with their wickedness  
and princes with their treachery,

<sup>4</sup>lecherous all of them, hot as an oven over the fire  
which the baker does not stir  
after kneading the dough until it is proved.

<sup>5</sup>On their king's festal day the officers  
begin to be inflamed with wine,  
and he joins in the orgies of arrogant men;

<sup>6</sup>for their hearts are heated by it [*are heated by it: prob. rdg, Heb draw near*] like an oven.

While they are relaxed all night long  
their passion slumbers,  
but in the morning it flares up  
like a blazing fire;

<sup>7</sup>they all grow feverish, hot as an oven,  
and devour their rulers.

King after king falls from power,  
but not one of them calls upon me.

<sup>8</sup>Ephraim and his aliens make a sorry mixture;  
Ephraim has become a cake half-baked.

<sup>9</sup>Foreigners fed on his strength,  
but he was unaware;  
even his grey hairs turned white,  
but he was unaware.

<sup>10</sup>So Israel's arrogance cries out against them;  
but they do not return to the LORD their God  
nor seek him, in spite of it all.

<sup>11</sup>Ephraim is a silly senseless pigeon,  
now calling upon Egypt, now turning to Assyria for help.

<sup>12</sup>Wherever they turn, I will cast my net over them  
and will bring them down like birds on the wing;  
I will take them captive as soon as I hear them flocking.

<sup>13</sup>Woe betide them, for they have strayed from me!  
May disaster befall them for rebelling against me!  
I long to deliver them,  
but they tell lies about me.

<sup>14</sup>There is no sincerity in their cry to me;  
for all their howling on their pallets  
and gashing of themselves over corn and new wine,  
they are turning away from me.

<sup>15</sup>Though I support them, though I give them strength of arm,  
they plot evil against me.

<sup>16</sup>Like a bow gone slack,  
they relapse into the worship of their high god [they relapse ... god: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*],  
their talk is all lies [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* that is their stammering speech in Egypt],  
and so their princes shall fall by the sword.

**8**<sup>1</sup>Put the trumpet to your lips!

A [*prob. rdg, Heb Like a*] vulture hovers over the sanctuary of the LORD:  
they have broken my covenant  
and rebelled against my instruction.

<sup>2</sup>They cry to me for help:

'We know thee, God of Israel. [We ... Israel: *prob. rdg, Heb O my God, we know thee, Israel*]'

<sup>3</sup>But Israel is utterly loathsome;  
and therefore he shall run before the enemy.

<sup>4</sup>They make kings, but not by my will;  
they set up officers, but without my knowledge;  
they have made themselves idols of their silver and gold [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* so that he may be cut off].

<sup>5</sup>Your calf-gods stink, O Samaria;  
my anger flares up against them.  
Long will it be before they prove innocent.

<sup>6</sup>For what sort of a god is this bull?  
It is no god,  
a craftsman made it;  
the calf of Samaria will be broken in fragments.

<sup>7</sup>Israel sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind;  
there are no heads on the standing corn, it yields no grain;  
and, if it yielded any, strangers would swallow it up.

<sup>8</sup>Israel is now swallowed up,  
lost among the nations,  
a worthless nothing.

<sup>9</sup>For, like a wild ass that has left the herd,  
they have run to Assyria.  
Ephraim has bargained for lovers;

<sup>10</sup>and, because they have bargained among the nations,  
I will now round them up,  
and then they will soon abandon  
this setting up of kings and princes.

<sup>11</sup>For Ephraim in his sin has multiplied altars,

altars have become his sin.

<sup>12</sup>Though I give him countless rules in writing,  
they are treated as invalid.

<sup>13</sup>Though they sacrifice flesh as offerings to me and eat them,  
I [*prob. rdg, Heb he*], the LORD, will not accept them.  
Their guilt will be remembered  
and their sins punished.  
They shall go back to Egypt,  
or in Assyria they shall eat unclean food.

<sup>14</sup>Israel has forgotten his Maker  
and built palaces,  
Judah has multiplied walled cities;  
but I will set fire to his cities,  
and it shall devour his castles.

**9**<sup>1</sup>Do not rejoice, Israel, do not exult like other peoples;  
for like a wanton you have forsaken your God,  
you have loved an idol [*an idol: or a harlot's fee*]  
on every threshing-floor heaped with corn.

<sup>2</sup>Threshing-floor and winepress shall know them no more,  
new wine shall disown [*Or fail*] them.

<sup>3</sup>They shall not dwell in the LORD's land;  
Ephraim shall go back to Egypt,  
or in Assyria they shall eat unclean food.

<sup>4</sup>They shall pour out no wine to the LORD,  
they shall not bring their sacrifices to him;  
that would be mourners' fare for them,  
and all who ate it would be polluted.  
For their food shall only stay their hunger;  
it shall not be offered in the house of the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>What will you do for the festal day,  
the day of the LORD's pilgrim-feast?

<sup>6</sup>For look, they have fled from a scene of devastation:  
Egypt shall receive them,  
Memphis shall be their grave;  
the sands of Syrtes shall wreck them,  
weeds shall inherit their land,  
thorns shall grow in their dwellings.

<sup>7</sup>The days of punishment are come,  
the days of vengeance are come  
when Israel shall be humbled.  
Then the prophet shall be made a fool  
and the inspired seer a madman  
by your great guilt.

<sup>8</sup>With great enmity Ephraim lies in wait for God's people  
while the prophet is a fowler's trap by all their paths,  
a snare in the very temple of God.

<sup>9</sup>They lead them deep into sin as at the time of Gibeah.

Their guilt will be remembered and their sins punished.

<sup>10</sup>I came upon Israel like grapes in the wilderness,  
I looked on their forefathers  
with joy like the first ripe figs;  
but they resorted to Baal-peor  
and consecrated themselves to a thing of shame,  
and Ephraim became as loathsome as the thing he loved.

<sup>11</sup>Their honour shall fly away like a bird:  
no childbirth, no fruitful womb, no conceiving;

<sup>12</sup>even if they rear their children,  
I will make them childless, without posterity.  
Woe to them indeed when I turn away from them!

<sup>13</sup>As lion-cubs emerge only to be hunted [As lion-cubs ... hunted: *prob. rdg, Heb unintelligible*],

so must Ephraim bring out his children for slaughter.

<sup>14</sup>Give them, O LORD – what wilt thou give them?  
Give them a womb that miscarries and dry breasts.

<sup>15</sup>All their wickedness was seen at Gilgal; there did I hate them.  
For their evil deeds I will drive them from my house,  
I will love them no more: all their princes are in revolt.

<sup>16</sup>Ephraim is struck down:  
their root is withered, and they yield no fruit;  
if ever they give birth,  
I will slay the dearest offspring of their womb.

<sup>17</sup>My God shall reject them,  
because they have not listened to him,  
and they shall become Wanderers among the nations.

## God 's judgement on Israel

**10**<sup>1</sup>Israel is like a rank vine  
ripening its fruit:  
his fruit grows more and more, and more and more his altars;  
the fairer his land becomes, the fairer he makes his sacred pillars.

<sup>2</sup>They are crazy now, they are mad.  
God himself will hack down their altars  
and wreck their sacred pillars.

<sup>3</sup>Well may they say, 'We have no king,  
for we do not fear the LORD;  
and what can the king do for us?'

<sup>4</sup>There is nothing but talk,  
imposing of oaths and making of treaties, all to no purpose;  
and litigation spreads like a poisonous weed  
along the furrows of the fields.

<sup>5</sup>The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf-god of Beth-aven;  
the people mourn over it [the people mourn over it: *or the high god and his people mourn*] and its priestlings howl,  
distressed for their image, their glory,  
which is carried away into exile.

<sup>6</sup>It shall be carried to Assyria  
as tribute to the Great King;  
disgrace shall overtake Ephraim  
and Israel shall feel the shame of their disobedience.

<sup>7</sup>Samaria and her king are swept away  
like flotsam on the water;

<sup>8</sup>the hill-shrines of Aven are wiped out,  
the shrines where Israel sinned;  
thorns and thistles grow over her altars.  
So they will say to the mountains, 'Cover us',  
and to the hills, 'Fall on us.'

<sup>9</sup>Since the day of Gibeah Israel has sinned;  
there they took their stand in rebellion.  
Shall not war overtake them in Gibeah?

<sup>10</sup>I have come against the rebels to chastise them,  
and the peoples shall mass against them  
in hordes for their two deeds of shame.

<sup>11</sup>Ephraim is like a heifer broken in,  
which loves to thresh corn,  
across whose fair neck I have laid a yoke [*a yoke: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*];  
I have harnessed Ephraim to the pole that he [*he: prob. rdg, Heb Judah*]  
may plough,  
that Jacob may harrow his land.

<sup>12</sup>Sow for yourselves in justice,  
and you will reap what loyalty deserves.  
Break up your fallow;  
for it is time to seek the LORD,  
seeking him till he comes and gives you just measure of rain.

<sup>13</sup>You have ploughed wickedness into your soil,  
and the crop is mischief;  
you have eaten the fruit of treachery.

Because you have trusted in your chariots,  
in the number of your warriors,

<sup>14</sup>the tumult of war shall arise against your people,  
and all your fortresses shall be razed  
as Shalman razed Beth-arbel in the day of battle,  
dashing the mother to the ground with her babes.

<sup>15</sup>So it shall be done to you, Bethel,  
because of your evil scheming;  
as sure as day dawns, the king of Israel shall be swept away.

**11**<sup>1</sup>When Israel was a boy, I loved him;

I called my son out of Egypt;

<sup>2</sup>but the more I called, the further they went from me;  
they must needs sacrifice to the Baalim  
and burn offerings before carved images.

<sup>3</sup>It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
I who had taken them in my arms;

<sup>4</sup>but they did not know that I harnessed them in leading-strings [leading-strings: *or* cords of leather]

and led them with bonds of love [bonds of love: *or* reins of hide] –  
that I had lifted them like a little child [I had ... child: *prob. rdg, Heb* like those who lift up a yoke] to my cheek,  
that I had bent down to feed them.

<sup>5</sup>Back they shall go to Egypt,  
the Assyrian shall be their king;  
for they have refused to return to me.

<sup>6</sup>The sword shall be swung over their blood-spattered altars  
and put an end to their prattling priests  
and devour my people in return for all their schemings,

<sup>7</sup>bent on rebellion as they are.

Though they call on their high god,  
even then he will not reinstate them.

<sup>8</sup>How can I give you up, Ephraim,  
how surrender you, Israel?

How can I make you like Admah  
or treat you as Zeboyim?

My heart is changed within me,  
my remorse kindles already.

<sup>9</sup>I will not let loose my fury,  
I will not turn round and destroy Ephraim;  
for I am God and not a man,  
the Holy One in your midst;

I will not come with threats [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* <sup>10</sup>they shall go after the LORD] like a roaring lion.

No; when I roar, I who am God,  
my sons shall come with speed out of the west.

<sup>11</sup>They will come speedily, flying like birds out of Egypt,  
like pigeons from Assyria,  
and I will settle them in their own homes.

This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>Ephraim besets me with treachery,  
the house of Israel besets me with deceit;  
and Judah is still restive under God,  
still loyal to the idols he counts holy.

**12**<sup>1</sup>Ephraim is a shepherd whose flock is but [is a ... but: *or* feeds on] wind,  
a hunter chasing the east wind all day [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* piling up treachery and havoc];

he makes a treaty with Assyria  
and carries tribute of oil to Egypt.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah  
and is resolved to punish Jacob for his conduct;  
he will requite him for his misdeeds.

<sup>3</sup>Even in the womb Jacob overreached his brother,  
and in manhood he strove with God.

<sup>4</sup>The divine angel stood firm and held his own [The divine ... own: *or* He  
stood firm against an angel, but flagged];  
Jacob wept and begged favour for himself.  
Then God met him at Bethel  
and there spoke with him.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD the God of Hosts, the LORD is his name.

<sup>6</sup>Turn back all of you by God's help;  
practise loyalty and justice  
and wait always upon your God.

<sup>7</sup>False scales are in merchants' hands,  
and they love to cheat;

<sup>8</sup>so Ephraim says,  
'Surely I have become a rich man, I have made my fortune';  
but all his gains will not pay  
for the guilt [for the guilt: *prob. rdg, Heb* for me, guilt] of his sins.

<sup>9</sup>Yet I have been the LORD your God since your days in Egypt;  
I will make you live in tents yet again, as in the old days.

<sup>10</sup>I spoke to the prophets,  
it was I who gave vision after vision;  
I spoke through the prophets in parables.

<sup>11</sup>Was there idolatry in Gilead?  
Yes: they were worthless  
and sacrificed to bull-gods in Gilgal;  
their altars were common as heaps of stones beside a ploughed field.

<sup>12</sup>Jacob fled to the land of Aram;  
Israel did service to win a wife,  
to win a wife he tended sheep.

<sup>13</sup>By a prophet the LORD brought up Israel out of Egypt  
and by a prophet he was tended.

<sup>14</sup>Ephraim has given bitter provocation;  
therefore his Lord will make him answerable  
for his own death  
and bring down upon his own head the blame  
for all that he has done.

**13**<sup>1</sup>When the Ephraimites mumbled their prayers,  
God himself denounced Israel;  
they were guilty of Baal-worship and died.

<sup>2</sup>Yet now they sin more and more;

they have made themselves an image of cast metal,  
they have fashioned their silver into idols,  
nothing but the work of craftsmen;  
men say of them,  
'Those who kiss calf-images offer human sacrifice.'

<sup>3</sup>Therefore they shall be like the morning mist  
or like dew that vanishes early,  
like chaff blown from the threshing-floor  
or smoke from a chimney.

<sup>4</sup>But I have been the LORD your God since your days in Egypt,  
when you knew no other saviour than me,  
no god but me.

<sup>5</sup>I cared for you in the wilderness,  
in a land of burning heat, <sup>6</sup>as if you were in pasture.  
So they were filled,  
and, being filled, grew proud;  
and so they forgot me.

<sup>7</sup>So now I will be like a panther to them,  
I will prowl like a leopard by the wayside;

<sup>8</sup>I will meet them like a she-bear robbed of her cubs  
and tear their ribs apart,  
like a lioness I will devour them on the spot,  
I will rip them up like a wild beast.

<sup>9</sup>I have destroyed you, O Israel; who is there to help you?

<sup>10</sup>Where now is your king that he may save you,  
or the rulers in all your cities  
for whom you asked me,  
begging for king and princes?

<sup>11</sup>I gave you a king in my anger,  
and in my fury took him away.

<sup>12</sup>Ephraim's guilt is tied up in a scroll,  
his sins are kept on record.

<sup>13</sup>When the pangs of his birth came over his mother,  
he showed himself a senseless child;  
for at the proper time he could not present himself  
at the mouth of the womb.

<sup>14</sup>Shall I redeem him from Sheol?  
Shall I ransom him from death?  
Oh, for your plagues, O death! Oh, for your sting, Sheol!  
I will put compassion out of my sight.

<sup>15</sup>Though he flourishes among the reeds [*among the reeds: prob. rdg, Heb  
between (or a son of) brothers*],  
an east wind shall come, a blast from the LORD,  
rising over the desert;  
Ephraim's spring will fail and his fountain run dry.  
It will carry away as spoil  
his whole store of costly treasures.

<sup>16</sup>Samaria will become desolate because she has rebelled against her God;

her babes will fall by the sword and be dashed to the ground,  
her women with child shall be ripped up.

## **Repentance, forgiveness, and restoration**

**14**<sup>1</sup>Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God;  
for you have stumbled in your evil courses.

<sup>2</sup>Come with your words ready,  
come back to the LORD;

say to him, 'Thou dost not endure iniquity [Thou ... iniquity: *or* Thou wilt  
surely take away iniquity]

Accept our plea,

and we will pay our vows with cattle from our pens.

<sup>3</sup>Assyria shall not save us, nor will we seek horses to ride;  
what we have made with our own hands  
we will never again call gods;  
for in thee the fatherless find a father's love.'

<sup>4</sup>I will heal their apostasy; of my own bounty will I love them,  
for my anger is turned away from them.

<sup>5</sup>I will be as dew to Israel  
that he may flower like the lily,  
strike root like the poplar [*prob. rdg, Heb like Lebanon*]

<sup>6</sup>and put out fresh shoots,  
that he may be as fair as the olive  
and fragrant as Lebanon.

<sup>7</sup>Israel shall again dwell in my [*prob. rdg, Heb its*] shadow  
and grow corn in abundance;  
they shall flourish like a vine  
and be famous as the wine of Lebanon.

<sup>8</sup>What has Ephraim any more to do with idols?  
I have spoken and I affirm it:  
I am the pine-tree that shelters you;  
to me you owe your fruit.

<sup>9</sup>Let the wise consider these things and let him who considers take note; for the LORD's  
ways are straight and the righteous walk in them, while sinners stumble.