



unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v90

Hosea

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Hosea

1 ¹ Yahweh gave this message to Hosea son of Beeri during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, and when Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel.

² When Yahweh first spoke through Hosea, Yahweh said to him, "Go and marry a prostitute. **Some of** her children will result from her sexual relations with other men. Do this to show how the people of this land have been very unfaithful to me, as though they were an unfaithful wife who has abandoned her husband in favor of other men."

³ So Hosea married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son for him. ⁴ Yahweh said to Hosea, "Name him Jezreel, because very soon I will punish the descendants of Jehu for all of the people that he slaughtered at the town of Jezreel. I will end the nation of Israel. ⁵ At that time, I will destroy the army of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

⁶ Gomer became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. Yahweh said to Hosea, "Name her Lo Ruhamah, because I will no longer pity the people of Israel. Instead, I will certainly remove them **from their land**."

⁷ However, I will pity the people of Judah, and I, Yahweh their God, will rescue them. I will do it myself; I will not save them by using their bows, swords, warfare, horses, or horsemen."

⁸ After Gomer had weaned Lo Ruhamah, she became pregnant **again** and gave birth to **another** son. ⁹ Yahweh said, "Name him Lo Ammi, because you **people of Israel** are no longer my people, and I am no longer your God."

¹⁰ Yet someday the people of Israel will become a people group that is vast in number. In the very place where God said to them, "You are not my people," he will call them, "sons **and daughters** of the living God." ¹¹ Then the people of Judah and the people of Israel will unite together and choose one leader for all of them. It will be a marvelous time when Jezreel happens, that is, when God brings his people back to their own land as though sowing them there as seeds, and they will prosper there.

2 ¹ **Yahweh also said**, "At that time, you will say to your fellow Israelite men, 'Ammi, you are God's people,'

and **you will say** to your fellow Israelite women, 'Ruhamah, you are ones whom God loves.'"

² Children, dispute earnestly with your mother, because she is no longer my wife, and I am no longer her husband.

Tell her to stop her sexually immoral behavior and to stop being unfaithful to me.

³ Otherwise, I will strip her as naked

as on the day she was born. I will make her as bare as a wilderness. I will cause her to become as dry as a desert,

and I will let her die of thirst.

4 I will not pity her children, because they are as unfaithful as their prostitute mother.

5 I say this because she has been unfaithful to me and has acted shamefully. Indeed, she said, "I will run to the ones who love me; they are the ones who give me my food and water, my wool and linen, my olive oil and my **wine to drink.**"

6 So **I am about to do things that will be as though** I am blocking her road with thorn-bushes

and building a wall in her way so that she does not know what to do.

7 She will repeatedly seek the ones that **she thinks** love her, but she will not find them. Then she will think, "Perhaps I should return to my actual husband, because I was better off then than I am now."

8 None of them understand that I, **Yahweh**, am the one who gave them

their grain, wine, and olive oil;

I am the one who gave them abundant silver and gold, which they used to make images for Baal.

9 Therefore, I will come back and take my grain from them when it is ripe and the juice of my grapes in their season.

I will take from them the wool and linen

that I gave to them to cover their bodies.

10 Now I will expose how shameful they have been in front of those **gods** that they think love them. No one will be able to rescue them when I punish them.

11 I will stop all of their celebrations: their yearly feasts, their new moon festivals, their Sabbath days, and all of their **other** regular festivals.

12 I will destroy all their grapevines and fig trees, which they said were payments to them from those **gods** who loved them.

I will turn those productive plants into a wild thicket, and wild animals will eat the fruit **that remains.**

13 I will punish them for all the times that they burned incense to honor the various Baals.

They decorated themselves with rings and other jewelry and went to worship those **false gods** that they thought loved them,

but they forgot about me! —this is what Yahweh declares.

14 However, listen! I am working to persuade my people to worship me again;

I will make them experience **what their ancestors did in** the wilderness

and I will speak tenderly to them.

15 I will give their vineyards back to them from that **starting** point,

and I will cause the Valley of Achor, **instead of a place of trouble**, to become a place

where they will confidently
expect **me to do** good things
for them.

They will respond to me there
willingly as they did long ago,
when I freed them from
being slaves in Egypt.

16 At that time—this is what
Yahweh declares—they will call
me ‘My Husband.’

They will not call me ‘My
Baal’ anymore.

17 I will not allow them to
speak the names of the Baals,
and they will never use those
names again.

18 At that time I will make an
agreement for them
with the wild animals, the
birds,
and the creatures that crawl
on the ground.

I will also remove weapons of
war such as bows and swords
from the land.

The result will be that my
people will be able to live
safely and peacefully.

19 They will belong to me
forever as **though we are**
married.

I will do what is right and
fair toward them,
and I will faithfully love them
and act mercifully toward
them.

20 I will be faithful to them,
and they will truly know me,
Yahweh.

21 At that time, **when they ask**
for what they need,

I will respond—this is what
Yahweh declares—

I will tell the heavens to send
rain,
and on their part, the
heavens will water the earth.

22 Then the earth will produce
grain, new wine, and olive oil,

and those things will provide
for **my people**, Jezreel.

23 I will establish them in the
land as my own.

I will pity Lo Ruhama,
and I will say to **those whom I**
called Lo Ammi, “You are my
people,”

and they, yes, they will say **to**
me, “You are our God.”

3 ¹ Then Yahweh said to me,
“Go and show to your wife that
you still love her, even though she
has been committing adultery with
another man who is her lover. That
will show that I still love the
people of Israel, even though they
worship other gods and love to eat
raisin cakes **in feasts that honor**
those gods.” ² So I bought her

back for myself for 15 pieces of
silver and 335 liters of barley.

³ Then I said to her, “You will live
here with me for a long time.
During that time, you must not be
a prostitute, and you must not
have sex with any man, and I will
do the same concerning you.”

⁴ This will show that **in a similar**
way, the Israelites will live for a
long time without a king, without
leaders, without sacrifices, without
sacred stone pillars, without a
sacred vest for a priest, and
without household idols. ⁵ But
later, the people of Israel will
again worship Yahweh their God
and want to obey him and their
king who is a descendant of King
David. In that future time, they
will revere Yahweh and marvel at
how he has blessed them.

4 ¹ You Israelite people,
listen to what Yahweh says!
Listen, because he is bringing
charges against you people who
live in this land, as follows:

no one is honest,

no one acts faithfully as they
promised in the covenant,
and no one knows God in
this land.

2 Instead, people curse and lie
and murder and steal and
commit adultery.

This is happening
everywhere! People are
killing other people
continually!

3 Because of all these things,
the land dries up,
and everyone who lives in it
wastes away,
along with the wild animals and
the birds in the sky.
Even the fish in the sea are
diminishing.

4 Certainly there is no one who
can dispute **these charges**,
and there is no one who can say
that I am wrong.

But you are like people who
argue with a priest **when he
corrects you!**

5 Bad things will happen to you
during the day,
and also at night, and to
your prophets, as well.

I am going to destroy the nation
of Israel, which is like a mother
to you.

6 I will destroy my people
because they have refused to
know me,
and because, on their part,
they have refused to know
me,
I will no longer allow them
to be my **kingdom of priests**.

The nation of Israel has
rejected the laws of their God;
therefore, for my part, also I
will reject her people.

7 The more the people
increased in number, the more
they sinned against me.

So instead of honoring them,
I will make people despise
them.

8 The priests feed on the sin
offerings that my people bring,
and each one craves for my
people to sin even more.

9 I will punish the priests along
with the **other** people.
I will punish them for how
they have behaved;
yes, I will pay them back for
what they have done.

10 They will eat, but they will
still go hungry.

They act like prostitutes, but
they will not have more
children,

because they have
abandoned obeying Yahweh.

11 Having sex with prostitutes,
drinking wine and new wine,
all make people unable to
think clearly.

12 My people ask their wooden
idols **to guide them**,
and **they think that** a
wooden stick will answer
them.

They do this because they have
strongly desired to be
unfaithful sexually and so they
are also unfaithful spiritually,
and because they are
unfaithful in these ways,
their God no longer directs
or protects them.

13 They burn sacrifices and
incense on the mountaintops,
on the hills,
and under oak trees, poplar
trees, and terebinth trees,
because the shade there is
pleasant.

That is why your daughters
have become prostitutes
and your daughters-in-law
have been unfaithful **to your
sons**.

14 I will not punish your daughters for being prostitutes or your daughters-in-law for being unfaithful to their husbands, because the men themselves go off to be with prostitutes and offer sacrifices with the prostitutes who serve at the idol shrines.

The people as a whole does not understand **what is right**, and so Yahweh will destroy them.

15 Even though you people of Israel are being unfaithful to Yahweh by worshiping idols, you should not cause the people of Judah to sin **also**.

Warn them, "Do not go to Gilgal or go up to Beth Aven to worship idols there.

Do not swear oaths **there**, saying, 'I swear by the life of Yahweh that I will do what I am promising.'"

16 I say this because the Israelite people behave as stubbornly as a young cow that refuses to obey.

So Yahweh certainly will not allow them to **freely** graze like a **gentle** lamb in a broad meadow.

17 No, the people of Ephraim have chosen to worship idols.

We can only leave them alone.

18 They have drunk all that there was to drink; they have fully prostituted themselves.

Their leaders have absolutely loved shameful things.

19 They will go into exile as **though** a powerful wind has swept them away, and **all of** their sacrifices to **idols** will only make them ashamed.

5 ¹ You priests, listen to this! You people of Israel, pay attention!

You members of the royal court, listen carefully, because I am going to judge you.

because you have enticed the people to sin at Mizpah, and you have made them sin at Mount Tabor.

2 Those who have rebelled against me have killed many people, so I will punish all of them.

3 I myself know all about you, people of Ephraim; I can see everything that the people of Israel do.

Indeed, people of Ephraim, you have now been unfaithful to me **by worshiping idols**,

yes, the people of Israel have made themselves unacceptable to me.

4 They prefer to do **evil** things, so they refuse to worship their God any more.

They do this because a strong desire to be physically and spiritually unfaithful is working among them,

and they do not know Yahweh.

5 The way that the people of Israel are so proud makes this clear to everyone.

The people of Israel and Ephraim will fail because of how much they have sinned, and the people of Judah will fail with them.

6 They will bring their flocks and herds and try to appease Yahweh by making sacrifices to him, but he will not receive them

because he has removed himself from them.

7 Those nations have been like an unfaithful wife to Yahweh because their people are **like** illegitimate children; **they do not belong to Yahweh.**

So now, **when they bring their sacrifices to the New Moon Festival,**

Yahweh will kill them

as they kill the animals that they bring **to sacrifice.**

8 Blow a horn in Gibeah;
blow a trumpet in Ramah!
Sound the alarm at Beth Aven!
The troops will follow behind you, Benjamin!

9 The people of Ephraim will become desolate
when I punish them.
I have declared to the tribes of Israel
what will certainly happen.

10 The leaders of Judah act like people **who steal land by** moving boundary markers.
Therefore, I will punish them abundantly.

11 I will cause the people of Ephraim to suffer greatly when I judge them
because they were determined to worship worthless idols.

12 So I will destroy the people of Ephraim, just as moths **eat through wool clothing.**
I will destroy the people of Judah, just as rot **eats through wood.**

13 Then the leaders of Ephraim realized that their nation was weak
and the leaders of Judah realized that their people were suffering.

Then the leaders of Ephraim sent messengers to the king of Assyria, **asking for his help.**

But that king cannot help Ephraim

or take away the suffering of Judah.

14 This is because I will be like a lion to the people of Ephraim;
I will be like a young lion to the people of Judah.

I will be the one who will cause soldiers to kill many of them, and I will stop caring for them.

I will cause soldiers to take them away,
and no one will rescue them.

15 Then I will leave them to themselves,

until they admit that they have sinned and that they need me to forgive them.

When they are greatly suffering,

then they will sincerely ask me to help them.

6 **1** **They will say to each other,** "Come, let us start obeying Yahweh again!

Although he is the one who has hurt us, he will heal us; he has wounded us, but he will bandage our wounds.

2 In a very short time he will make us strong again;
in just a few days he will restore us
so that we may live in his presence.

3 We need to know Yahweh; let us try hard to do that.

He will certainly help us, as surely as the dawn comes every morning.

He will restore us again like the rain,
as the spring rain restores the land."

4 **Yahweh** says, “You people of Ephraim and you people of Judah,

I do not know what more I can do with you!

You say that you will faithfully love me, but you love me about as long as the mist stays in the morning; you love me about as long as the dew stays that is gone early in the day.

5 That is why I sent my prophets **to tell you** to reform yourselves;

the messages that I told them to speak **warned you that soldiers** were coming to kill you.

What I have justly decided to do will happen as **surely as** the sun will shine.

6 I do all of this because I want you to faithfully love me rather than to offer me sacrifices;

I want you to truly know me rather than to give me burnt offerings.

7 However, on their part, they broke my covenant, just as Adam did;

in that way they were unfaithful to me.

8 Gilead is a city full of people who do wicked things.

People murder others there so often, it is as though their footprints leave trails of blood everywhere.

9 The priests are like bandits who lie in wait to ambush a man;

they join together to murder people on the road to Shechem.

Indeed, they have done terrible and shameful things.

10 Among the people of Israel I have seen something horrible:

the people of Ephraim **stopped worshiping me** and became prostitutes.

Yes, the people of Israel made themselves unacceptable to me **by sinning**.

11 People of Judah, I have also appointed a time when I will judge you.

Whenever I consider enabling my people to prosper again,

7 **1** whenever I want to restore the people of Israel, I see how sinfully the people of Ephraim act

and all of the evil things that the people of the city of Samaria do.

Indeed, they constantly deceive others,

thieves break into houses, and gangs of robbers steal from people in the streets.

2 They never stop to think that I remember every evil thing that they do.

It is as though they have piled up their sins all around them; **it is as though** those sins are always right in front of me.

3 The people of Israel please their king by doing evil things, and they please the royal officials by telling lies.

4 All the people are **unfaithful to me like** an adulterous spouse.

They are **so intent on doing evil things that they are** like a burning oven that a baker has heated;

it is so hot that the baker does not need to stir the fire

from when he starts to knead the dough until he adds leavening to it.

5 On the day that they celebrate the king’s festival,

the officials made him drunk with wine until he became sick.

Then the king joined in with those who mock me.

6 Indeed, the officials strongly desire to murder **the king**, as though their hearts were as hot as an oven.

They remain angry through the night, like an oven that the baker neglects while he sleeps;

but then in the morning it blazes up like a roaring fire.

7 All of those conspirators are **so passionate to be important that they are** like hot ovens, and they destroy their rulers.

All of their kings die violently; yet not one of them calls out to me **to help him**.

8 The leaders of Ephraim make alliances with foreign nations, so Ephraim has become **ruined, like** a pancake that someone has failed to turn over.

9 Foreigners have drained away their resources, yet the people of Israel do not realize it.

Their nation is becoming powerless, like a man who is growing old and weak,

yet they do not realize it.

10 The way that the people of Israel are so proud makes this clear to everyone.

Yet they have not begun again to worship Yahweh their God,

and they have not tried to know me despite all of these things **that have happened**.

11 The leaders of Ephraim are like a dove, foolish and stupid. They asked the leaders of Egypt **to help them**;

then they asked the leaders of Assyria **to help them**.

12 Whenever they go **to seek help**, I will not allow them to succeed.

I will be like a hunter who catches birds with a net and pulls them down from the sky.

I will punish them, just as I warned their assembly that I would do.

13 Terrible things will happen to them because they have stopped obeying me!

I will destroy them because they have rebelled against me!

For my part, I wanted to rescue them,

but for their part, they **just** tell lies about me.

14 They do not sincerely cry out to me **to help them**; instead they just lie on their beds and wail.

They slash themselves **to offer their blood to pagan gods**, hoping to get grain and new wine,

but they reject me.

15 As for me, I trained them and made them strong, but now they plan to do evil things to me.

16 They ask for help, but not from me, the Most High God; they are as unreliable as a bow that does not shoot straight.

Their officials will die in battle because what they have said has made me very angry.

The people of Egypt will laugh at them for this."

8 **1** **Yahweh said to me**, "Blow a trumpet **to warn the people**!

My people have rejected the agreement that I made with them,

and they have rebelled against obeying my laws.

Therefore, an enemy is ready to invade the land where my people live, as a vulture watches its prey.

2 The Israelites cry out to me, 'Our God, we people of Israel know you!'

3 But the people of Israel have rejected what is good, so an enemy will chase after them.

4 As for them, they set up kings without asking me, and they chose leaders, but I did not approve them.

They used their silver and gold to make idols for themselves, and that is why I will destroy them."

5 "I reject your calf idol, you people of Samaria!

I am very angry with you. You need to stop acting in ways that make you guilty!

6 And it was in Israel that a craftsman made that idol! It is not God!

I will make sure that someone smashes that calf idol of Samaria into pieces.

7 What the people of Israel have done is completely foolish, like trying to plant wind.

What they get in return will be terrible, like reaping a whirlwind.

Their plans will produce nothing good,

like grain stalks that have no heads and that can produce no flour.

Even if they did produce something,

foreigners would come and steal it all.

8 The other nations have already stolen Israel.

Even now the Israelites live as one of the other nations, and there is nothing special about them at all.

9 Indeed, the Israelites have gone to Assyria like a lonely wild donkey **looking for a mate**.

The people of Ephraim have paid other nations to be their allies.

10 But although they pay other nations **to help them**, I will now begin to punish them.

They will soon suffer greatly because of everything that the great king will demand from them.

11 Because the people of Ephraim built many altars **on which to make sacrifices to take away sin**,

those altars became places where they sinned **even more**.

12 Even if I wrote down my law for them ten thousand times, they would still consider that it did not apply to them.

13 They offer sacrifices to me and eat **some of** the meat from those sacrifices, but I, Yahweh, am not pleased with those people.

I remember the wrong things that they have done

and now I will punish them because they have sinned.

As for them, they will become **slaves** again **like they were** in Egypt.

14 The people of Israel have forgotten God, the one who created their nation,
and they have built palaces
for themselves instead.

The people of Judah have built many cities with strong walls to protect them,

but I will send fire to burn down their cities
and it will completely consume their strong towers.”

9 ¹ You people of Israel, do not celebrate
joyfully the way other peoples do!

I say this because you have been unfaithful to your God.

You have loved the **gifts that you thought were** payments from your idols
at every threshing floor where people thresh grain.

2 **Soon** the people will not have enough grain or wine,
and the new wine will be gone.

3 The people of Israel will not continue to live in the land that belongs to Yahweh.

Instead, the people of Ephraim will go back to **being slaves as they were in** Egypt,
and in Assyria they will eat food that God has forbidden them to eat.

4 They will not pour out wine offerings to Yahweh,
and their sacrifices will not please him.

Their sacrifices will be like the food that is in the house with a dead body;

everyone who eats that food will be unacceptable to God, because they will eat that food only for themselves;

they will not bring it into Yahweh’s temple.

5 You will not be able to celebrate the feasts that Yahweh appointed
or the festivals that honor Yahweh.

6 Look! Even if some of them escape when the Assyrians destroy their towns,
people in Egypt will capture them,
and people in **the Egyptian capital city of** Memphis will bury them.

Weeds will grow over the silver objects that they treasure,
and thorns will fill their tents.

7 Now is the time for God to punish the Israelites;
now is the time for him to do to them as they deserve.

When he does, the people of Israel will know it!

You say that the prophet is a fool

and **that** the one whom the Spirit inspires is insane,

but that is only because you have sinned so much

and because you are very hostile **toward God.**

8 Prophets watch over the people of Ephraim because my God told them to do so,
but people set traps for them everywhere they go.

People are hostile to them, even in the temple of their God.

9 The people have become very grievously sinful,
just as the people of Gibeah were **long ago.**

God will not forget how wickedly they have acted;
he will punish **them for** their sins.

10 **Yahweh** says, “When I chose Israel,

I was **as pleased with them**
as someone who finds
grapes in a desert.

When I first looked at your
ancestors,

they were **as delightful** as
the very first figs that grow
on a young fig tree.

But then they started
worshipping the Baal of Peor.

They gave themselves
completely to that disgusting
idol,

and they became as
disgusting as the idol that
they loved.

11 What the people of Ephraim
are most proud of will quickly
disappear.

No one will conceive, carry,
or give birth to children.

12 Even if they do raise
children,

I will take away every one of
them so that none survive.

Yes, indeed, it will be terrible
for them

when I abandon them!

13 I have decreed for Ephraim
just as I have decreed for Tyre,
that city in its beautiful
place,

that the people of Ephraim will
bring out their own children

for their enemies to
slaughter.”

14 **Hosea** says, “So Yahweh,
give to these people—but what
can I ask you to give them?

Give them miscarriages
and no way to nurse babies.”

15 **Yahweh** says, “Because of all
of the wicked things that my
people have done at Gilgal,
that is where I started to
hate them.

Because of all of the evil things
that they do,

I will drive them out of my
land.

I will not love them any longer;
all of their leaders rebel
against me.

16 I have struck the people of
Ephraim

so that they **are as infertile**
as grapevines that have
shriveled roots and cannot
produce fruit.

Even if the women do give
birth,

I will kill the children whom
they love.”

17 **Hosea** says, “The God whom
I worship will reject the people
of Israel

because they have not
obeyed him.

Therefore, they will wander
among the **other** nations, **away**
from their home.”

10 ¹ The people of Israel
are **selfish**, **like** a productive
vine

that establishes its fruit for
itself.

The more the people prospered,
the more altars they built **to**
worship idols.

The more their land produced,
the more elaborate they
made their pillars **to idols.**

2 The people of Israel deceive
themselves;

now they must suffer for
their sins.

Yahweh will be the one to tear
down their altars

and smash their **sacred**
pillars.

3 Indeed, soon they will say,
“We have no king

because we did not honor
Yahweh.

However, even if we had a king,
he could not do anything to
help us.”

4 The people of Israel make
false promises;
they swear empty oaths and
make agreements **that they**
do not keep.

So people accuse each other to
the judges

and the number of these
harmful legal disputes is
multiplying throughout the
land like poisonous weeds in
a plowed field.

5 The people who live in
Samaria will be afraid

about what will happen to
the calf idol of Beth Aven.

Indeed, the people who worship
it will mourn over it,

and the idolatrous priests
who serve that idol will cry
out

about it and about how splendid
it was,

because it will be splendid
no more.

6 The enemy will carry the idol
itself to Assyria

as a gift for its king.

The people of Ephraim will be
ashamed,

yes, all of the people of
Israel will feel humiliated
because what they had
believed and lived by was
wrong.

7 The king of Samaria will be
no more.

He will go away like a chip of
wood **floating away** on the
surface of the water.

8 Yahweh will destroy the
places on the hilltops, like Beth
Aven,

where the people of Israel
sin **by worshiping idols**.

Thorns and weeds will grow up
and cover their altars.

Then the people will beg the
mountains and hills,

“Fall down on us and cover
us **to protect us from**
Yahweh!”

9 Israel, you have been sinning
ever since your ancestors did
those terrible things at Gibeah,
and you have continued
doing such things ever since
then.

War will certainly overtake all
of the wicked people in Gibeah.

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

I will gather armies from
other nations to attack them
and capture them because of
their double sin.

11 The people of Ephraim were
like a young cow that someone
had trained

and that was happy to walk
around on the stalks of
grain.

Its neck was flawless **because**
no one had ever put a yoke on
it.

But for my part, I will ignore
its beautiful neck.

Now I will make the people of
Ephraim work hard, as though
they were a young cow that I
was harnessing for the first
time.

It will be as though the
people of Judah will have to
plow,

yes, it will be as though the
people of Jacob will have to
break up the hard ground
with no one to help them.

12 Start doing what is right, as
though you were planting good
seeds,

and it will be as though you
were harvesting the crop
from those good seeds when

I reward you for being faithful to me.

Do the hard work of **changing your ways as though you were** plowing new ground.

Now is when you must start to know me.

Then I will come

and abundantly bless you by doing what is right for you.

13 But instead of that, you have done what is wicked, which is like planting poisonous crops,

and it is as though you have harvested and eaten those crops because what you have done has made you lie to each other and treat each other unjustly.

You did this because you deceived yourselves,

thinking that you knew the best way to do things and that your many soldiers would protect you.

14 But **they will not**; your enemies will attack you, and they will destroy all of your strong cities,

just as Shalman destroyed the city of Beth Arbel,

when his soldiers bashed mothers to death on top of their children.

15 I will do the same thing to you, people of Bethel, because you are extremely wicked.

When the battle begins at dawn,

the enemy will completely destroy the king of Israel.

11 **1** When the Israelite people were young as a nation, I loved them as a father loves a son,

and I brought them out of Egypt.

2 **However, the more** I called to the Israelites, the more they ignored me.

Those people kept offering sacrifices to the Baal **gods** and burning **incense** to **honor** the statues of them.

3 **The people of Ephraim were like a small child** and I was **like** the one who taught them to walk.

It was as though I carried them in my arms,

but they did not understand that I was the one who took care of them.

4 I gently guided them, because I loved them.

I was to them like a loving father who lifts his infant to his cheek

and I bent down to feed them.

5 The Israelites will not return to **being slaves in** the land of Egypt,

but **now** the king of Assyria will rule over them,

because they refused to worship me any more.

6 Enemies will attack **the people in** their cities with swords

and will destroy the bars **of their gates**.

Their enemies will kill them because of their **evil** plans.

7 My people are determined to no longer worship me.

Though they call out to me, the Most High,

I will certainly not help them.

8 And yet, I cannot bring myself to give you up, Ephraim!

I cannot just let you go, Israel!

I cannot completely destroy you
the way I destroyed the cities of
Admah and Zeboiim!

I am in anguish deep within me;
I love you much too strongly
to do this!

9 Although I am extremely
angry, I will not act accordingly;
I will not destroy **the people**
of Ephraim again!

I will do this because I am God,
not a human being.

I am the Holy One who lives
among you,
and I will not come to
destroy you even though I
am extremely angry.”

10 **Hosea said,** “The Israelites
will return to Yahweh.

He will call out with a loud,
powerful voice,
and when it is he who calls out,
his people will come back,
deeply respectful, from **the**
lands around the sea to the
west.

11 Others of his people will
come from Egypt **as timid** as a
bird,

and others will come from
the land of Assyria **as docile**
as a dove.”

I will settle them in their own
homes again. **This will happen,**
because I, Yahweh, have
declared it.

12 The people of Ephraim have
constantly lied to me,
yes, the people of Israel are
continually treacherous.

However, the people of Judah
still obey God;

they remain faithful to the
Holy One.

12 ¹ The people of Ephraim
do what is useless;
yes, they keep busy all day
doing worthless things.

They constantly tell lies and do
violent things.

First they make a treaty with
Assyria,

and then they send olive oil
to Egypt **to get help from**
that nation.

2 Yahweh is bringing a legal
case against Judah as well,
and he will punish the
descendants of Jacob for
how they have lived.

He will give them what they
deserve for the things they
have done.

3 When their ancestor Jacob
was still in his mother’s womb,
he grabbed the heel of his
brother Esau **because he**
wanted to be the firstborn.

When Jacob grew up and
became strong, he wrestled
with God.

4 He struggled with an angel
who appeared to him, and he
won.

Then Jacob wept and begged
the angel to bless him.

God met Jacob at Bethel,
and there God spoke with
him.

5 That one is Yahweh, the
commander of the heavenly
armies;

“Yahweh” is the name that
he commanded us always to
use for him.

6 So you, **people of Israel,**
restore yourselves as God’s
people by **obeying** your God!

Be faithful to him and act
justly toward others,
and always trust in your
God.

7 But the merchants **among you**
use dishonest scales;
they love to cheat **people.**

8 The people of Ephraim boast and say,

“We have become very rich!
We have gained great
possessions for ourselves.

No one can find anything
wrong in all the work we
have done, that is, nothing
that would count as sin for
us.”

9 “I am Yahweh your God, the
one **who brought your ancestors**
out of Egypt.

I will make you live in tents
again,
just as your people did when
they celebrated the
Celebration of Shelters.

10 I told the prophets what to
say **to the people**,

and I am the one who
showed them many times
what I am going to do.
I used the prophets to teach
my people through stories
and examples.”

11 The people of Gilead are
certainly wicked;

they are now completely
worthless.

The people sacrifice bulls at
Gilgal,

but enemies will tear down
their altars
and leave them looking like
piles of stones in a plowed
field.

12 Your ancestor Jacob ran
away to the land of Aram **to**
escape from his brother Esau.

There he, Israel, worked **as a**
shepherd to pay for a wife,
and he kept on tending
sheep to pay for a wife.

13 **Later** Yahweh used the
prophet **Moses** to bring the
Israelites out of Egypt,

and through that prophet,
Yahweh took care of them.

14 But the people of Ephraim
have made their Lord extremely
angry.

Their Lord will hold them
responsible for all of the
people whom they have
killed,
and he will give them what
they deserve for all of the
ways that they have offended
him.

13 ¹ **In the past**, when the
leaders of Ephraim spoke,

many people became afraid.
The leaders of Israel became
arrogant.

Then they caused the people to
sin by worshiping Baal,
and so they must die.

2 Now they keep on sinning
more and more;
they use their silver to make
metal idols for themselves.

They cleverly design the
statues,

but all of them are only the
work of human craftsmen.

The people who worship these
idols talk to them.

They sacrifice human beings
to them, and they kiss these
calf-idols!

3 Because of these things,
those people will **quickly**
disappear

like clouds that form in the
morning **and then vanish**,
like dew that the sun dries up
early in the day,

like chaff that the wind
blows away from the
threshing floor,
like smoke that drifts out
through a window.

4 **Yahweh says to his people**,
“Even so, I am Yahweh your
God,

the one who brought your
ancestors out of the land of
Egypt.

You should acknowledge no god
except me,

and no one else can save
you.

5 I was the one who cared for
your ancestors

when they were in the very
dry desert land.

6 When I fed them, they ate
until they were full;

when they ate until they
were full, they became
proud.

That is why they stopped
thinking about me.

7 So I will be **as fierce** toward
them as a lion;

I will be like a leopard that
lurks **to ambush them** beside
the road.

8 I will attack them **as furiously**
as a mother bear whose cubs
someone has stolen;

it will be as though I will rip
their chests open.

Right then and there I will
completely destroy them, like a
lioness devouring her prey,

like wild animals tearing
their victims apart.

9 You have caused me to
destroy you, people of Israel,
because you rebelled against
me, your **only** helper.

10 You have a king, but it looks
like he is unable to save you
in any of your cities.

Your ancestors said **to me**, 'Give
us a king and officials,' **and I**
did so.

But those rulers cannot help
you now.

11 I become angry **when you**
request a king, but I give you a
king.

Later, I become angry **again**,
so I take him away.

12 I have kept a record of all of
the evil things that you people
of Ephraim have done;

yes, I have stored up **an**
account of all of your sins.

13 You people of Ephraim will
suffer like a woman does when
she gives birth,

but you are like a foolish
baby

who refuses to come out

when it is time to be born.

14 I would have rescued you
from going to the grave;

yes, I wanted to save you
from dying.

But now, you must suffer as
with a plague and die!

The enemy must destroy you
and send you to your graves!

I cannot decide differently
about this.

15 Even though the people of
Ephraim have prospered more
than the other tribes,

I, Yahweh, will send enemies
who will come from the east
like a scorching wind out of
the desert.

They will destroy all of
Ephraim's sources of wealth,

and they are the ones who
will carry away everything
valuable that the people of
Ephraim own.

16 The people of Samaria are
guilty and so I must punish
them

because they have rebelled
against me, the God whom
they promised to worship.

Their enemies will kill them
with swords;

they will smash their little
children on the ground,
and they will cut open their
pregnant women."

14 ¹ You people of Israel,
begin again to worship and
obey Yahweh your God.

You must do this because
terrible things are
happening to you because
you have been sinning.

² Decide what you will say, and
determine that you will obey
Yahweh.

Say to him, "Please forgive
us for all of the wrong things
that we have done,
and accept what we will do
now to please you,
and please accept what we
say **as we promise to obey**
you instead of sacrifices of
animals.

³ **We know that** Assyria will not
save us

and it will not benefit us to
ride on **war** horses.

We will never again say, 'You
are our gods'

to **the idols** that we have
made.

You, Yahweh, are the one who
acts mercifully toward
orphans."

⁴ **Yahweh says, "When they say**
that to me, I will forgive them
for turning away from me;

I will love them generously,
because I will no longer be
angry with them.

⁵ I will refresh the people of
Israel

just as dew **refreshes the**
ground.

They will prosper and become
beautiful

and they will become **as**
strong and stable as the
trees of Lebanon.

⁶ They will become widely
influential;

they will be as majestic as an
olive tree,

and they will be **as delightful**
as the aroma of **the cedar**
trees in Lebanon."

⁷ The people of Israel will come
back and live under Yahweh's
protection.

They will grow abundant
grain again;

they will become as
productive as a vineyard.

People will speak well of
Yahweh, like they speak well of
the **fine** wine from Lebanon.

⁸ **Yahweh says,** "People of
Ephraim, I want nothing more
to do with idols!

I am the one who responds
to you and watches over you.

I am the source of everything
good in your life, like a tree

that always stays green and
always produces fruit."

⁹ Anyone who is truly wise
should understand these things
that I have written.

Anyone who has good sense
must be sure that he knows
them.

Because what Yahweh tells us
to do is right,

and people who do what is
right will obey him,

but people who rebel against
him will ruin themselves by
not doing what he tells us to
do.