



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 worshiping
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.