

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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Hosea

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Hosea

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 *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 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 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 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 *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 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 *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 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 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 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 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 *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 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.