

HOSEA

WRITER

The inscription of these words come from the hand of Hosea (1:1), the son of Beeri. We know nothing of Hosea's early years, other than the fact that he ministered God's word to the northern kingdom of Israel. The name Hosea means "salvation." It is from the same root Hebrew word for Joshua and Jesus.

Hosea was commanded by God to marry Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim. After their marriage, however, she became unfaithful, leaving her home and giving herself over to prostitution. Nevertheless, Hosea was devoted to her, and thus took her back as his wife according to the command of God.

Through Gomer, Hosea had three children (1:3-9). The first was Jezreel, meaning "vengeance." The second was Lo-Ruhamah, meaning "not pitied," or "have no more mercy." The third was Lo-Ammi, meaning "not my people." The name of each child represented God's relationship with His people in the northern kingdom of Israel throughout their time of apostasy.

Hosea's ministry was to the northern kingdom of Israel. Throughout the book, he often uses the largest tribe of the northern kingdom, Ephraim, to refer to the northern kingdom. Hosea was the first prophet to address the northern kingdom, prophesying God's judgment upon the kingdom for its apostasy to idol worship. The sorrow that befell Hosea in his family proclaimed the sorrow that God felt for His people of the northern kingdom who went after idol gods. As Hosea's wife turned from him, so Israel turned from their God who had given them birth by bringing them out of Egyptian captivity. As Gomer played the harlot, Israel played the harlot with idol gods.

DATE

The ministry of Hosea began during the reign of Jeroboam II (770-749 B.C.) of the northern kingdom and Uzziah (792-740 B.C.) of the southern kingdom. It continued into the reign of Hezekiah (728-697 B.C.). His ministry could have extended over a period of seventy years, with the writing of different portions of this book throughout these years. Through this period he wrote the material of this book, adding the final prophecies to the book at the end of his life.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first years of the ministry of Hosea took place during a period of turmoil among the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel. Leading up to this period were

the reigns of Jehu who killed Joram (2 Kg 9:21-28), as well as the heirs of Jezebel and Ahab (2 Kg 9:30 – 30:28). After Jehu came Jehoahaz (2 Kg 13:1-9) and Joash (2 Kg 13:10-13). Then came Jeroboam II who reigned for forty-one years (2 Kg 14:23-29). It was during the reign of Jeroboam II that Hosea began his ministry.

After the death of Jeroboam II, the kingship of the northern kingdom fell into a state of anarchy. Zechariah came to the throne, but reigned only six months before he was assassinated by Shallum (2 Kg 15:8-12). Shallum reigned only one month before he was deposed by Menahem (2 Kg 15:13-16). Menahem reigned ten years before he died a natural death (2 Kg 15:17-22). During his reign, the northern kingdom was invaded by Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria. After Menahem came Pekahiah who reigned for two years (2 Kg 15:17-23). He was assassinated by Pekah, the captain of his guard. During his reign, Pekah sought help from the Egyptians in his defense against the Assyrians. He made an alliance with Rezin of Syria in order to overthrow Ahaz of the southern kingdom, Judah. He was eventually assassinated by Hosea. Hosea paid tribute to Assyria in order to continue his reign and the existence of the northern kingdom. However, Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria, eventually arrested him. The successor to Shalmaneser V, Sargon, took Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. After the destruction, 27,280 Israelites of the northern kingdom were taken into Assyrian captivity in 722/21 B.C. This was the end of the northern kingdom of Israel. The southern kingdom would come to a close in 586 B.C.

Betrayal And Restoration

(1:1 – 3:5)

Outline: (1) Marriage and family (1:1 – 2:1), (2) Unfaithfulness and restoration (2:2-23), (3) Restoration of a broken marriage (3:1-5)

Chapter 1

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

1:1-3 *The word ... that came to*

Hosea: Throughout the book, God spoke through Hosea, as well as through the personal words of God that Hosea recorded by inspiration (See Jr 1:2; Jl 1:1; Mc 1:1; Zp 1:1). **Take ... a wife:** Hosea's marriage was by the command of God. Not only was he to marry, but he was to

marry a prostitute. God's reason for this marriage was to illustrate to Hosea and Israel their spiritual adultery in going after idol gods.

1:4-5 **Jezeel:** The name of the child was given by God, for God wanted to proclaim to Israel, the northern kingdom, that judgment was coming. God would bring an end to the house of Jehu by bringing vengeance upon him and his heritage.

Blood of Jezeel: Reference was to the city of Abha and Jezeel where the house of Ahab was massacred by Jehu (2 Kg 9:21-37). Though this prophecy was spoken sixty years before the fall of the northern kingdom, Jehu's cruel slaughter of the house of Ahab signalled the be-

ginning of the fall of the northern kingdom. **Break the bow:** The power of Israel would be broken and she would go into captivity.

1:6,7 Lo-Ruhamah: Since the Hebrew name Lo-Ruhamah means “not pitied,” or possibly, “unfavored,” it is conceivable that this was an illegitimate child. In reference to God’s pity on Israel, the time had come for the cessation of mercy. The northern kingdom was to come to an end because she no longer represented God among the nations. However, God would continue to have mercy on Judah. The northern kingdom eventually went into captivity in 722/21 B.C., but God did not allow the southern kingdom, Judah, to go into captivity until 586 B.C. God’s deliverance of the northern kingdom from the nations had ceased, and thus He would not spare them of His judgment on them through the Assyrian army.

1:8,9 Lo-Ammi: This third child was illegitimate. As the child was not Hosea’s, so Israel was no longer God’s people. The protection that came from the covenant that God had with Israel was terminated since Israel had violated her conditions for maintaining the covenant (See Ex 19:5; Ps 118:6; Ez 16:8). She became an idolatrous nation, serving other gods.

1:10,11 Judah ... Israel ... will be gathered together: Though God would eventually send all His people into captivity, there would be a gathering of the two kingdoms again into one nation. They would be restored to Palestine as one nation. Those who conclude that the

northern ten tribes went into captivity, never again to return, miss this prophecy. God had warned Israel that the apostasy would take them into captivity. However, He minded them in this context that He would remember His promise to Abraham, that his seed would be as the sand of the sea (Gn 22:17; 32:12). **One head:** In their apostasy they appointed their own kings, and finally kings were appointed for them by foreign powers. But in their return from captivity, they would again accept God as their only king, and eventually the Messiah who was to come in the future. King Jesus would eventually be their head and the center of reference to all their faith (See comments Ep 1:20-23; Cl 1:18). However, He would not reign on this earth. He would reign from heaven at the right hand of God.

Chapter 2

2:1 Ammi ... Ruhamah: The time would come during their captivity when all Israel would repent, and then be claimed by God. They would then be returned to the land of promise as a repentant remnant.

UNFAITHFULNESS AND RESTORATION

2:2-5 Contend with your mother:

This is a plea to the adulterous woman to forsake her adultery. Israel was the adulterous woman in her idolatry. God thus gives a passionate plea for a remnant to come out of a nation that had given itself over to the worship of the Baal gods. The plea was to the children, not the wife.

The nation as a whole had gone into idolatry, but there were individuals within the nation who remained faithful. The identity of Israel as a nation was lost in the apostasy, but God always deals with individuals. We must not think, therefore, that because the majority went into idol worship, that every individual of the nation followed the idolatrous majority. **As in the day she was born:** When Israel came out of Egyptian captivity, she was as a newly born naked baby (See comments Ez 16:4-14). Because Israel had followed after the whoredoms of idolatry, God was about to strip her naked again. **Wilderness:** Israel was spiritually destitute. **Not have mercy on her children:** This statement must be viewed in conjunction with the plea of verse 3. If there was no plea, then the children would be lost in idolatry. If the faithful few followed after the majority of the idolatrous nation, then there would be no spiritual remnant of Israel to return after the chastisement of captivity. **Lovers:** These were the many Baals whom they superstitiously thought would bring them wealth. Beginning during the time of the judges, the Israelites gave themselves over to the idols of other nations, which idols they assumed brought them their sustenance of life and riches. They became a rich nation during the reign of Solomon. Since Solomon gave himself over to the idols of his many wives, the people concluded that wealth could be acquired by conducting business deals with idolatrous nations.

2:6-8 Hedge up your way: God would cut off the idolatry from the na-

tion. Israel went so far into idolatry that God had to use extreme measures to bring her back to Him. **She will eagerly pursue after her lovers:** In order to maintain her wealth, Israel would follow after the idolatrous nations, but the nations would eventually forsake her. They would not save her from the destruction of Assyrian captivity. **Return to my first husband:** The calamity through which God would take the nation would eventually stimulate repentance. The faithful remnant would eventually realize that there was no salvation in the idolatrous nations after which the Israelite nation had formerly adopted idolatrous worship. Upon repentance, however, God would receive the faithful back into a covenant relationship. **She did not know:** The irony of Israel was in the fact that it was God who brought them out of captivity and built them as a nation. After God had done all this for the nation, the people attributed their growth to prosperity and security to the Baal gods of the nations around them. Solomon attributed his prosperity to his wise business dealings with the nations, and his acceptance of the gods of those nations. Israel followed after his example, and subsequently in the history that followed Solomon, the people gave themselves over to the idols of the nations from which they traded for wealth.

2:9-13 Take back My grain: In order to bring Israel to repentance, God had to take from them that in which they trusted, that is, their wealth. He had to impoverish them in order to generate faith in Him. Israel would be brought into abject poverty in order that she real-

ize that life does not consist of the abundance of that which one possesses. She had run to idolatry in order to gain wealth, and thus the wealth became the idol of her existence. All that God had given to her in order to encourage gratitude would be taken away in captivity. **Days of the Baals:** This was the apostate era of Israel when she decked herself as an adulterous woman in order to lure lovers (See Jr 4:30; Ez 23:40). She gave herself over to the nations who would bring her wealth and admiration.

2:14-20 At the end of the preceding pronouncement of judgment, came a proclamation of God's redemptive actions toward His people. Though Israel had given herself over to idol gods, God would woo her back into His presence and covenant. **Into the wilderness:** The wilderness wanderings of Israel after they came out of Egyptian captivity was a time when Israel had a close relationship with God. It was a time when the people existed under the total care and preservation of God through the manna and quail. Into this relationship, therefore, God promised that He would once again bring His repentant people back into the land of promise. **Vineyards:** The vineyards that were given to the people by God, but taken away by their Assyrian captivity, would once again be restored to the people. **Valley of Achor:** When entering the promised land, Israel sinned at the Valley of Achor (Ja 7:20-26; Is 65:10). It was then a place where they experienced trouble because of their sin, and now it would be a place of hope. The trouble that the nation experienced at

Achor revealed that God would be their God of hope in times of trouble. At that time, they experienced the punishment that resulted from breaking the law of God, but also the grace of God that preserved them throughout the conquest of the land. **I will make a covenant with them:** This statement seems to take Israel beyond the restoration of the remnant from their captivity to the time after the Babylonian captivity. Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire would allow the captives to freely return to their homelands. God would renew His covenant with the restored remnant. However, Jeremiah 31:31-34 seems to be in view of the new covenant that God would establish with His people as a result of their obedience to the gospel during the Messianic era (See comments). The restored covenant relationship with Israel after the captivities was made in view of the new covenant that would come with the Messiah. **Break the bow:** See comments Is 2:1-4; 35:9; Zc 9:10 (Lv 26:3-8; Ez 34:25-28). **I will betroth you to Me:** The repentant could bring nothing to the One who would give all things. Israel had nothing to offer God. Grace and mercy would go forth as a gift, not something that could be earned by obedience.

2:21-23 There would be a consummation in the restoration of spiritual Israel. Through their restoration God would manifest His mercy. **Jezreel:** The faithful give thanks to God for their sustenance of grain, wine and oil. The grain, wine and oil ask the earth that responds with soil for growth. The earth asks of the heavens for the rain that responds

with rain to produce growth. It is God who gives the rains from heaven in order to sustain Jezreel. The spiritual would be sown in the earth and nourished by the mercy of God. Those who were formerly disowned by God, would once again be His people. They would be His people because of their repentance. Their faithfulness, therefore, would result in their rebirth and continuation as a nation.

Chapter 3 RESTORATION OF A BROKEN MARRIAGE

3:1-5 Gomer had left Hosea and given herself over to adultery and prostitution. However, God commanded Hosea to bring her back as his wife. In the same manner God would bring apostate Israel back into a covenant relationship with Him. The people had given themselves over to the festivals of the Baal gods. Nevertheless, God loved His people, even though His people did not return His love. What is being manifested in this call for restoration is God's true character. He is the God of love, and thus true love has no limits. **Bought her:** We are not told from whom Hosea had to buy Gomer. She had possibly sold herself to a brothel or to a keeper of prostitutes. The price he had to give for her was the price of a slave. We would not say that it was easy for Hosea to do what God had commanded. We would only assume that he still loved her, regardless of the immoral state in which he found her. **Dwell with me many days:** Gomer was unclean at the time Hosea took her home. She had to go through a period of purification, and

thus was only to dwell in the home of Hosea. We can only imagine the atmosphere of Hosea's home during this time of purification. **Without a king:** When God sent both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel into captivity, it was the end of their kings on earth. They lost their nationhood as a result of their apostasy, and thus after their restoration to Palestine they would no longer have a king on earth. As at the time when they came out of Egyptian captivity, God reigned over them in the post-captivity until the coming of David their king, who was King Jesus. The Messianic promise refers to King Jesus who would ascend to the right hand of God and be their king (See comments Dn 2:44; 7:13,14). **Later days:** This would be the last days of Israel that would take place when the Messiah came and His kingdom reign was established (See comments At 2:16,17). It was in the last days of Israel when the spiritual Israel began with the baptism of about 3,000 people on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. Those who obeyed the gospel in the last days were those who expressed their "fear" of the Lord by obedience to the gospel.

Decay And Decline (4:1 – 13:16)

Outline: (1) Cause of decay and decline (4:1-19), (2) Condemnation of national leadership (5:1-15), (3) God's plea for national repentance (6:1 – 7:16), (4) Announcement of judgment (8:1 – 9:17), (5) Repent or perish (10:1-15), (6) God's faithful love (11:1-12), (7) The fruitful becomes unfruitful (12:1 – 13:16)

Chapter 4

CAUSE OF DECAY AND DECLINE

4:1-6 *No truth or mercy or knowledge:* There was no truth in the land in the sense that there was no faithfulness to the will of God. There was no mercy, and thus the society of Israel had digressed into an unloving society in which there was no compassion for one another. Each one was concerned only for himself. There was no knowledge, or communion with God (See Jr 22:16). The people were ignorant of the law of God, and thus created social morals after their own desires. They were a society in moral chaos, and thus headed for self-destruction. All that God stated through Hosea in this text identifies a society that is in moral decay. And when a society is morally distant from God, the people do not know God. ***Blood touches blood:*** Murder and murder for revenge was the ultimate identity of a socially imploding society. ***Charges against a priest:*** The people had no respect for religious leadership. In their self-willed arrogant deprivation, they were set on doing that which was right in their own eyes, regardless of any moral direction from the religious leadership. Because of this intimidation, the religious leadership that existed would not take a stand against the evil of the society. The religious leaders had seemingly given up on correcting the moral digression. ***Destroy your mother:*** The mother of the individual citizen was the nation itself. Therefore, God would destroy the nation (the mother) in order to preserve a faithful remnant. In this context, the priests and the prophets were

condemned because they followed the people into religious apostasy. Through their erroneous teachings and false prophecies, they led the people into idolatry. ***Destroyed for lack of knowledge:*** The nation would be destroyed because they gave up a knowledge of the one true and living God (See comments Mk 7:1-9). It was not that they became a nation without religion. They followed after idolatrous worship. However, they forgot the law of God. In the absence of a knowledge of the law of God, they created religious beliefs and behavior after their own desires. Once one creates a religion after his own desires, he then creates a god who approves of his religious behavior. Such a person no longer knows the God of heaven. Once the law of God is forgotten by the parents, the parents have no spiritual heritage to pass on to their children. The children, therefore, suffer from the parent's ignorance of the word of God (Compare comments 2 Th 2:9-12; Rv 22:18,19). Any society that gives up a knowledge of the word of God, sets itself on a course of moral destruction. Those who do not know their Bibles cannot know the God of the Bible.

4:7-11 *Glory into shame:* The sinful ways in which they took pride would be the occasion for which they would be shamed. When they repented during their captivity, they would look back on their behavior at this time in history and realize how foolish they were. ***Like people, like priest:*** The indictment against the religious leaders was that the priests conformed to the wishes of the people. Instead of maintaining their responsibili-

ties of teaching the people the word of God, they forgot the law, and then rejected the law in order to maintain their positions as priests before the people (See Mk 7:1-9). They were supported full-time by the people, and thus in order to maintain their support, they conformed to the desires of those who rejected the word of God.

4:12-14 Counsel from their idols: They had led themselves to believe that they received answers from their idols. Idolatry is the imagination of things that originate from within the mind of men. The idolaters were thus consulting their own imaginations in order to fulfill their own lusts. **Tops of mountains:** Places of worship were established to which they would go to carry out their idolatrous ceremonies. Their daughters committed fornication at their places of worship and married people committed adultery. **I will not punish:** It was not that they would go without punishment from God. They would receive indirect punishment from God by reaping the results of their own sin. They would reap what they had sown (Gl 6:7,8). The immoral living of the parents would result in the children following after harlotry. The children thus increased the sin of their parents to the point that the nation had digressed into a nation that no longer represented God. **The people who do not understand will fall:** The nation had gone past the point of moral regeneration. Only destruction of the nation and captivity would lead to the saving of a small remnant.

4:15-19 This context is a warning to

Judah, the southern kingdom. The two principal altars in the southern part of the northern kingdom were in Gilgal and Beth-aven (Bethel). They were in close proximity to the residents of Judah. Hosea thus warned those of Judah not to go up to these altars of idolatry. **Beth-aven:** Hosea changed the name of Bethel, meaning "house of God," to Beth-aven, meaning "house of iniquity." Judah could not go to the shrines of idols and at the same time claim to be swearing allegiance to God. **Backsliding heifer:** Israel was as a stubborn cow that would not be led. **Can the Lord now feed them:** Since Israel had joined herself to idolatrous worship, she could no longer be fed by the Lord. She had rejected the law of God and followed after her own imaginations (vs 6). Her society was established after the morals of her own choosing, and thus there was no way for repentance. If one does not feel the guilt of sin, there is no desire for repentance. Israel's conscience had been dulled by her form of religiosity that conformed to the desires of the people. They had given up a conscience that was based on the word of God. Because they had given themselves over to follow after their own religious inventions, God was bringing the Assyrians to take them away into captivity. The northern kingdom would eventually fall to the Assyrians in 722/21 B.C. The generation that would be taken into captivity would die in captivity. Only their repentant descendants would return in 536 B.C. with the Medo-Persian release of captives during the reign of King Cyrus.

Chapter 5

CONDEMNATION OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

5:1-7 This chapter is a condemnation of the unrighteous leadership of the priests and kings, and the willing followers of the people. **Priests:** Though the religious leaders encouraged the people to follow after erroneous religions, the people were still held accountable for following them. Every individual will be held accountable for his own sin (2 Co 5:10). Religious leaders who conform to the will of the people are not leaders for God. **Mizpah ... Tabor:** Both mountains were known places of worship to the Baal gods. From these to primary locations, the priests and kings led the people in idolatrous worship and away from God. **Rebels:** They were bound to a culture of corruption and immorality. Because they had at this time in their history become a culture of wickedness, there was no turning back to the righteousness of God. Subsequently, God had no choice but to carry out His promise that He would take them from the land and into captivity. **I know Ephraim:** God knew the hearts of the people. **Their deeds:** Their behavior manifested their apostasy. Apostasy is never a simple change in one's beliefs, but in behavior that is directed by values. In Israel's case, their idolatry had changed their world view. And since world view determines one's values, and values determine behavior, they could not turn back because their world view had been altered and patterned after pagan religions. **Haughtiness:** In her prosperity, Israel became

arrogant. She suffered from a sickness of the heart in that she took pride in her national whoredom with other nations. They viewed their relationship with other nations as security for their continued existence as a nation among the nations. **Judah also will fall:** Though Judah was warned not to follow the wickedness of her northern sister, Hosea prophesied here that she too would fall and go into captivity. Judah went into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. All Israel would fall as a result of their own idolatrous behavior and failure to rely on God. **Go with their flocks:** They would go with their sacrifices to the altar in order to perform the required rites of the law. However, their hearts were far from the Lord. Since they had created a god after their own imagination, the god to whom they offered their sacrifices was not the God of heaven. **He has withdrawn:** In the day of their judgment, they would seek the Lord. However, the Lord withdrew from them and turned them over to the destruction of the Assyrians and Babylonians. As a small nation, they could not have stood alone against the powerful empires of their neighbors. Israel was not a warrior nation. The Assyrians and Babylonians were. Without the help of God, therefore, the fate of Israel was sealed. They would succumb to the conquest of warrior nations as the Assyrians and Babylonians. **Foreign children:** The parents had passed to the children their faith in idols, and thus the children knew nothing of the law of God. They did not know God (4:6). **New moon:** This was a feast when sacrifices were

offered (See 1 Sm 20:6,29; Is 1:13,14). It was not that the destruction would be within the coming month, though reference could have been to the imminent invasion of Tiglath-pileser which took place at this time in their history (2 Kg 15:29).

5:8-15 Blow the cornet ... trumpet:

These were blown to alert the people to invasion. Gibeah and Ramah were in the territory of the northern kingdom, and thus the invasion was first coming upon them. **“Behind you, Benjamin”:** It seems that the northern kingdom had already been invaded, and Judah was at this time threatened. **Ephraim will be desolate:** God had forewarned Israel that if they forsook His law, He would forsake them. **Remove the boundary:** As her northern sister, Judah also was a culture of thieves. They moved the land boundary markers in order to claim the land of others. Governments that allow its citizens to steal land from one another have morally fallen, since land is the means by which the citizens survive. **Commandment of men:** Contrary to following after the commandments of God that they rejected, they followed after the commandments of men (See comments Mk 7:1-9). **Moth ... rottenness:** As a moth slowly eats away at the cloth, so the destruction would be slow (Is 51:8). The fall of both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel was gradual. They did not realize that they were going into total destruction until it was too late. **When Ephraim saw his sickness:** Cultural apostasy is gradual. It is so gradual

that the people do not realize that they are falling away from God. With both Israel and Judah the cultural degradation was the same. They gradually went into apostasy. In order to bring them back to the law of God, it took the social chaos of captivity. There is no social chaos when a society goes into apostasy. Repentance of the society, however, is always with pain. Paradigm shifts to God come with great social chaos, for the shift to righteousness is against the standards of apostate behavior and beliefs that are accepted by the majority of the society. **Ephraim went to the Assyrian:** Israel had moved so far away from God, that in her fear of Egypt, she sought to make an alliance with the nation, Assyria, that would eventually take her into captivity. **King Jareb:** The word “Jareb” means “warrior” or “great king.” This was not a specific king of Assyria, but a title that was commonly used to refer to all kings of Assyria as great kings. **As a lion:** God would use the nation of Assyria to discipline both Israel and Judah. When God unleashed the Assyrians on Israel, there was no help from Him to save her. Since the proxy judgment of Israel through the Assyrians was the work of God, no other nation was allowed by God to rise up and save Ephraim. **Until they acknowledge their offense:** Israel would go into captivity and stay there until they repented. Their restoration to the land, therefore, depended on their spiritual restoration to God. The calamity of their fall was for the benefit of their salvation.

Chapter 6 GOD'S PLEA

FOR NATIONAL REPENTANCE

6:1-3 Herein is an appeal of Hosea on behalf of the people. Since it was God who had torn them with national calamity, then it could only be God who could heal them. **Two days:** In comparison to the period of time it took them to go into apostasy, Hosea indicates that their binding up will be brief. **Third day:** This is not a direct reference to the resurrection of Jesus. It is difficult to determine the specific use of the third day other than the fact that it was a time of restoration. However, it could possibly have been used later to refer symbolically to the resurrection of the Messiah (See Lk 13:32,33). **Then we will know:** This is more than knowledge of God. Reference is to behavior that is directed by knowing the will of God. If one does not obey the will of God, he cannot know God. **Morning:** When there is repentance, there is the dawning of a new life (Is 58:8; 60:1,2). **Rain:** When there is rain, there is the beginning of a new existence (See Lv 26:4,5; Dt 11:14; 28:12). God will come with blessing when we turn to Him in obedience. The promise of this text points to the time of the Messiah, whose coming would bring the spiritual blessings of God (See Is 35:5,6; 44:3; Ez 36:25-28).

6:4-11 With verse 4, the narrative again turns to God's lament over the unfaithfulness of His people. **Goodness ... as the early dew:** The righteous behavior of the nation was short-lived. **Hewn them by the prophets:** God sent proph-

ets with a message of rebuke and condemnation. The light of God's judgments manifested the darkness into which they had morally digressed. **I desire mercy and not sacrifice:** They performed the ceremonies of the law without a heart of compassion. They became the example of a religiosity that was not accompanied with moral behavior. Their outward performance of law was not a manifestation of an inward godliness (See comments Mk 7:1-9). **Knowledge of God:** Herein is defined the knowledge of God. It is more than performance of law. When one truly knows God, he knows more than the commandments of God. He behaves his knowledge of God. Heartless obedience of law is worthless in the sight of God (See 1 Sm 15:22; Ps 40:6-9; 50:8-15; Is 1:11-17; Mc 6:8). **Transgressed the covenant:** They had failed to keep the conditions of the covenant. **Treacherously:** They obeyed the ceremonies of the law, but behaved as wicked people. They assumed that their obedience to religious ceremonies would atone for wicked behavior. **Gilead:** This city was known as a city of murderers (See 2 Kg 15:25). **Murder ... by consent:** The religious leadership did not stand up against the evil of the day. Instead of taking a stand against wickedness, their silence condoned a society that had morally gone wrong. In being silent as religious leaders, therefore, they partook of that which was committed. **A harvest appointed:** As God had harvested the wickedness of Israel by sending her into captivity, Judah also would suffer the same harvest.

Chapter 7

7:1-3 Verse 1 seems to be the concluding thought of 6:11. After Israel endured her captivity, then she would realize the wickedness of her idolatry. As Hosea was to rescue his wife Gomer from harlotry, God would rescue His people through captivity. The captivity would bring repentance, and thus as a nation she would be cleansed through captivity. Only when she was cleansed would she look back on her idolatry and understand how wickedly she had behaved before God. We would assume that Hosea's love for Gomer produced the same result in her life. **Healed Israel:** These prophecies of their captivity can never be understood properly if interpreters fail to recognize that the northern ten tribes of Israel were to be brought back from Assyrian captivity. Though they would stay longer in captivity than Judah, when the return came by the command of King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire, a remnant of all twelve tribes returned to their homeland of Palestine (See comments Et & Ne). **Before My face:** God knew all the wickedness of the people. Their sin was as a stench that turned Him from them.

7:4-7 This picture of the moral state of the nation is deplorable. We must understand this description as God would view the people from heaven. The king was guilty in that the wickedness of the nation amused him and his royal court. The people had no regard for covenant relationships with one another. Their sin was so prevalent that it was as the heated oven of a baker that is continually hot

except for the time when he is kneading the dough. They made the king drunken with wine while he stretched out his hand in union with those who would plot against him. In his drunkenness, a way was planned for his murder. Plotters professed loyalty to the king while they schemed to assassinate him (See 2 Kg 15). In their moral degradation, there was no one who sought to call on the Lord for deliverance from their deplorable state of affairs. Their consciences had been so seared with sin that the option of turning to God was void in their religious culture.

7:8-10 Mixed: The people had forsaken their culture that was based on God's word and separation from the sinful cultures of the nations. At this time in their history their behavior could not be identified as different from the wicked cultures of unbelievers. **Cake not turned:** They are burned on one side, and yet not cooked on the other. They were a worthless burnt cake that was to be thrown in the rubbish. **Foreigners:** Since they had become as the foreign idolatrous nations, they had no help from God, for He had turned them over to destruction. **Gray hairs:** They were at the end of their existence, but were unaware of their old age. **Pride of Israel:** Their desire to compete financially with the surrounding nations, specifically since the days of Solomon, was leading to their downfall. They focused on their wealth as a symbol of their greatness. Wealth and wickedness were more important than humble obedience to the word of God, which word they had long forgot-

ten (4:6). **They do not return:** They had long forgotten the way back to God. The prophets of God preached repentance, but they rejected the way of life presented by the prophets. It was a way of life that depended on God, not themselves.

7:11-16 Silly dove: They fluttered about, vacillating between alliance with either Egypt or Assyria. In her international confusion she did not realize that she would be caught in the trap of Assyrian domination. God would bring Israel to a close by the proxy judgment of the Assyrians (Lv 26:14-44; Dt 28:15-68). **Fled from Me:** Because they had forsaken trust in God, they flew into the trap of foreign conquest by the Assyrians. **I redeemed them:** God had redeemed them out of Egyptian captivity. However, they forgot their past protection by God and flew to alliances with foreign nations for protection. They would not now be redeemed out of the hands of those who would conquer them. In the face of destruction, they cried out to their idol gods. The true and living God was only one god in their pantheon of gods, and thus they were insincere in their pleas to God for deliverance. **Grain and wine:** Instead of pleading to God for their sustenance, they went to their idol gods. **Imagine mischief:** Regardless of their past where God strengthened the nation against the invasion of foreign nations, they focused on alliances with idolatrous nations. When in times of calamity, they turned to their idol gods and not to God who had helped them throughout their history. **Deceitful bow:** As a warrior cannot depend on an untrustworthy bow

in battle, so the nation was undependable. **Cursings:** The leaders reaped the reward of every idle word that came from their mouths. **Derision:** They would be mocked by the Egyptians when they fell to the Assyrians.

Chapter 8 ANNOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT

8:1-6 Israel was a backslidden nation. **Trumpet:** It was a time to warn the people of impending invasion. The Assyrians were on their way. God's judgment of the people through the proxy of the Assyrians was based on the fact that Israel had broken the conditions of their covenant with God. They had forsaken the law of God. **"We know You":** Their desperate cry to the Lord was unanswered. They claimed to know God, but they did not because of their disobedience of His law. They were no longer His people because they no longer made Him their God. **Set up kings:** The nation had digressed from God-anointed kings, to anointing kings of their own choice. In the end of the nation, foreign nations appointed kings for them. They thus could not claim to be the Israel of God simply because they had rejected God's direction of them as a nation through kings that He approved and anointed. **Calf of Samaria:** They set up a calf idol in Samaria their capital. It was a loathsome act in the face of God. They spurned the true God of heaven in order to worship an idol on earth. Their calf idol was proof that they had completely turned from God, and thus God turned

from them. Idolatry is the spirit of man to determine his own behavior and future. The images he makes are a reflection of his beliefs. When men seek to do that which is right in their own eyes, they have followed after the spirit of idolatry.

8:7-10 Their idolatry and rejection of God had come to a climax, and thus they had to reap what they had sown (See comments Gl 6:7). They had sown disloyalty to God. They were to reap national destruction and captivity. God turned them over to the nations, and thus they were as a people on their own, unable to stand against the power of warrior nations as Assyria. **Swallowed up:** Israel would become a worthless vessel that would not hold water. **Gone up to Assyria:** This is not the exile that would eventually take place in 722/21 B.C. Reference was to Israel's tribute to Assyria in order to buy their preservation from an invasion by the Assyrians. **Hired lovers:** She went into alliances with the nations in order to stand against those who would seek to conquer her. In the latter days of Israel, she relied on political schemes in order to protect herself against those who would defeat her. The leaders relied on their own political skills rather than trusting in the protection of God. **Waste away:** Though Israel made many alliances and paid tribute to other nations, God would bring them into judgment as they began to waste away as a nation.

8:11-14 Israel had followed after their own religious inventions. Judah took pride in temples and fortified cities. Though the northern kingdom had di-

gressed more quickly into apostasy, Judah would soon follow, and subsequently suffer the same fate as her northern sister. **Many altars:** When Jeroboam separated the northern ten tribes from Judah after the death of Solomon, he built altars in the north in order that the people not go to Jerusalem in Judea to offer sacrifices. The few idols with which he started the nation were increased throughout their history. They were at the time of Hosea a nation of numerous idols. **A foreign thing:** The law of God was so minimized that its precepts and judgments become a foreign thing in the minds of the people. They could not differentiate between the law of God and the idolatrous religion that they had created after their own imagination. **Eat it:** The people enjoyed the sacrificing since they enjoyed the eating of the sacrifice. They had turned from offering of sacrifices as devotion to God and enjoyment of fellowship with the priests to simply cooking meat for their own gratification. **The Lord does not accept them:** They offered and ate their sacrifices, but without a true knowledge of God (See Mc 6:6-9). Their sacrifices were void of a sincere heart that was devoted to God alone. **Will return to Egypt:** Egypt represented bondage, and thus they would go into the bondage of Assyria. **Forgotten his Maker:** Israel forgot that it was God who brought them out of Egyptian captivity. They built temples to foreign gods instead of worshipping the God of heaven. They had forgotten that the one true and living God does not dwell in temples made with hands (See comments

At 17:24-27). ***I will send fire:*** This prophecy applied to both Israel and Judah. God would send the Assyrians to burn the cities and temples of the northern kingdom in 722/21 B.C. He would send the Babylonians to burn Jerusalem and its temple in 586 B.C. All Israel, therefore, would end up in captivity because they turned from God their Maker to foreign gods they had created after their own imagination.

Chapter 9

9:1-6 This chapter describes the result of their sin that was explained in chapter 8. The nation was now ready for captivity. ***Do not rejoice:*** They must not rejoice over their prosperity, for all would be taken from them. Their whoring after other gods was the cause for their captivity. ***Loved harlots' hire:*** During the time of harvest they should have remembered that the fruits of the harvest were the blessing of God. However, they turned their harvest times into a time of debauchery and worship of the Baal gods. The time would come, however, when they would not enjoy the harvest of their homeland, but the burden of captivity. ***Return to Egypt:*** They would return to the bondage that they experienced in Egypt. They would not go into the bondage of Egypt, but into the bondage of Assyria (8:13). ***Eat unclean things:*** They would not be able to keep the statues of the law that determined what they could or could not eat. In bondage, they would eat anything for survival. ***Bread for their soul:*** They would be taken from those places to which they

took their sacrifices for an offering. ***Feast:*** In exile they will not be able to observe the appointed feasts of the Lord that were given in the law. ***Egypt will gather:*** They will be gathered into bondage. Their riches will be plundered. The wealth in which they trusted would be taken away.

9:7-9 *Days of visitation:* These were the days of God's judgment that had come. ***The prophet is a fool:*** This was the professional false prophet who lured the people away from God by his false proclamations of peace (Ez 13:10). In the time of their national calamity they would discover that his proclamations of peace were a lie. ***Spiritual man:*** Those priests who assumed spiritual leadership would also be identified as mad in view of the clear evidence of their apostasy. Both the prophets and priests proclaimed peace in order to maintain their positions. They thus had a lying spirit (1 Kg 22:22). ***Watchman:*** Israel was to be the beacon of truth to all the nations. In their desire to run after wealth and prosperity, they made trading alliances with other nations, and thus gave themselves over to the false gods of those nations. They compromised their faith in order to gain wealth. They thus lost their witness for God by adopting the idol religions of the nations around them. They failed in their responsibility to proclaim the one true and living God to all the nations of the world. ***Gibeah:*** Gibeah became symbolic of moral degradation when every man did that which was right in his own eyes (See Jg 19; 21:25).

9:10-13 *Grapes ... fig tree:* God

found Israel as a traveler would find grapes and a fig tree in the wilderness. She was an opportunity to quench thirst and satisfy hunger. But after delivering her from Egyptian captivity, she went after idol gods. The people then became in character and behavior that which they loved. Since idolatry is the creation of religious behavior after what one desires to believe and do, their character and behavior was molded according to what was right in their own eyes. **Ephraim:** The word means “fruitfulness.” The pride of an Israelite woman was to bear children. However, the time had come when Israel would no longer be fruitful. Conception, birth and motherhood would flee from them. **Glory:** The glory of Israel was once her relationship with God. But that glory was gone because she forsook God for idol gods. **I departed from them:** Israel was not a military nation as the Assyrians and Babylonians. When God departed as her protector, then she was subject to the conquest of the nations. **Planted in a pleasant place:** Israel was given the land of Palestine, the major trade route of the ancient world. Traders of the northern and southern countries had to pass through Palestine when trading with one another. **Tyre:** Since Tyre was originally given to Israel, it was the major port city for nations trading from the east with those nations of the Mediterranean Sea. Israel had a tremendous opportunity to affect the world for God, but she forsook her responsibility as a witness for truth. The world be a different place today if Israel had not gone into apostasy from the God of heaven.

9:14-17 Give them a miscarrying womb: This verse of Hosea’s question suggests that it would be better for Israel not to have children in captivity (Compare comments 1 Co 7:26; compare Jb 3:3; Jr 20:14; Lk 23:29). **Gilgal:** After Israel crossed into the land of promise, Gilgal was the first place they offered sacrifices in worship of God (Ja 4:20; Mc 6:5). However, by the time of Hosea’s ministry to Israel it been dedicated to idol worship (4:15; 12:11). What at first was acceptable worship had become detestable to God. **I hated them:** God detested them as a nation because of their evil deeds and idolatrous beliefs. **Root is dried up:** The generation to which Hosea prophesied could no longer produce a nation that was pleasing to God. When they gave up on God, they could no longer produce a nation of people that would represent God among the nations. They could only produce fruit that worshiped idol gods. **Cast them away:** The northern kingdom would be disbursed among the nations because they had forgotten the law of God (4:6).

Chapter 10

REPENT OR PERISH

10:1,2 Hosea had already spoken of the sin of Israel. Now it was time to speak of their punishment. Throughout the book, he spoke of both sin and punishment. In verse 1 he here repeats the wayward leadership of their kings. In verse 3 he repeats the sin of their idol worship. Throughout his message against these two evils, in this context he uses many metaphors to exemplify their apostasy.

Spreading vine: Instead of bringing forth fruit to honor God, they increased their altars in honoring their idol gods. They could have been a refreshing vine of truth for the nations. Instead, their religious beliefs and behavior were saturated with the false religions of the nations. **Sacred pillars:** See Ex 23:24; 1 Kg 14:23. **Heart is divided:** They were divided in loyalty between God and their idol gods.

10:3-8 We have no king: In exile they would have no king on earth, but they would always have God as their king in heaven. But because they did not fear God, and thus keep His commandments, their kings on earth were taken away. **What would a king do:** If they had feared God and kept His commandments, then they would have needed no king on earth. **Swearing falsely:** The kings on earth would keep their covenants only if it benefited them. The kings' loyalty was not to the people, but to themselves. Selfish leaders, therefore, do not swear by covenants in order to benefit the people, but to promote their own thirst for power. **Calves of Beth-aven:** The calf idols of Beth-aven would be destroyed. The idolatrous priests would mourn over their destruction because of their loyalty to the idols. **Carried to Assyria:** The golden calf idol will also be carried into captivity as spoil. **King Jareb:** The meaning is the "great king," a reference to the kings of Assyria. **Shame:** The idol from which Israel took council in reference to her future would be taken into captivity. Thus the false prophets who based their prophecy of peace on the golden calf idol would be shamed because they would be

found false. The people would be shamed because they believed the false prophets. **High places of Aven:** Israel went to the high places to practice their idolatrous worship. They followed after the gods that they had created after their own imagination, and thus were no longer a representative for the purpose of God. God destroyed their idols through the conquest of the Assyrians, and latter the southern kingdom by the Babylonians. The high places where they worshiped idols and practiced debauchery would again be overgrown with weeds and thorns. **Cover us:** With everything in which they had trusted gone, they would seek death instead of captivity.

10:9-11 Gibeah: This was a place of sinfulness on the part of Israel (9:9). Though they were victorious over their enemies, they were not victorious over sin, for since the days of Gibeah they had sinned. **Double iniquity:** Because of the nation's great sins, they as a nation would be chastised. They would be chastised by the Lord in order that a remnant be refined and restored. **Tread out the grain:** This was an easy work as the cow was allowed to eat of the grain as she tread out the grain. **Plow:** But Israel would be taken from the easy threshingfloor to plow in the field of captivity. She would be given the yoke of Assyrian masters.

10:12-15 Mercy: Though condemned to the judgment of captivity, there was still hope for Israel. Repentance always brings God's mercy. Their repentance demanded turning to God. God always stands just in that He offers

man a way of escape from his sinful condition. He is not willing that any perish (2 Pt 3:9). Because of the moral degradation into which the nation had sunk there was little hope of repentance. However, we must keep in mind that God's judgment on the nation was national judgment. We must remember that there were faithful individuals among the people who were listening to prophets as Hosea. When the northern kingdom eventually went into Assyrian captivity, many of these faithful individuals fled to Judah. **Trusted in ... your mighty men:** Without God, their most mighty men could not stand against the warrior soldiers of the Assyrian Empire. **Shalman:** This was possibly a reference to Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria who led the Assyrians against Israel (2 Kg 17:6). **At dawn:** At the beginning of the day, the king of Israel would be cut off. The kings of Israel would cease to exist, for Israel would never again have a king on earth. With both the northern and southern kingdoms, God terminated the earthly kings when they were taken into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity.

Chapter 11

GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE

11:1-4 This chapter in the book reveals God's love for Israel as His son (See Dt 32:6,18; Is 63:16; 64:8; Jr 3:19; MI 1:6; 2:10). God first called Israel as His son out of Egyptian captivity (Ex 4:22,23). However, God's love for Israel was not returned by those He delivered from bondage. Instead, Israel turned to other gods that they had created after

their own imagination. They did not shun the influence that the idolatrous nations had upon them. Though God had been the father of their birth, they rebelled against Him and followed after the influence of the nations. **Called my son:** See Mt 2:15. **They did not know:** The more God worked to teach them how to walk as an independent nation, the less they responded with faith in Him. **I led them:** God led them with ropes of love. He lightened their burden in order that they might eat of His blessings. He stooped to feed them in order that they might live and grow.

11:5-7 Regardless of God's love and care for Israel, they were as a rebellious child. They thus needed discipline. **Not return to ... Egypt:** In 8:13 and 9:3, returning to Egypt was used symbolically for returning to bondage. Here it is to be taken literally. They would not go again into Egyptian captivity, but into Assyrian captivity. **Because of their own counsels:** They had refused to listen to the counsel of God, and thus depending on their own desires they digressed away from God into idol worship. They would as a nation reap the consequences of their own apostasy. **Bent on backsliding:** The nation had developed a culture of rebellion. In such a social state they could not on their own return to God. Only captivity would heal them of their rebellious spirit. In their time of national calamity when the Assyrians came, God would not listen to their pleas for help, for they had to go into captivity in order for a repentant remnant to be formed and returned to the land years later.

11:8-12 Admah ... Zeboim: With Sodom and Gomorrah, these were two of the four cities of the plain that were destroyed by God during the time of Abraham (Gn 14:8; 19:24,25). **How will I give you up:** God yearned for His people. As a parent yearns for a rebellious child, so God longed for the repentance of his son. God's abiding love for His rebellious child would never allow Him to give up on Israel. His love eventually paid off in that a repentant remnant returned to Him almost two hundred years later when King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire allowed all former captive Israelites to return to the land of Palestine in 536 B.C. Though all captives did not return to the land, a repentant remnant did in order to reestablish the identity of Israel. **Judah still walks with God:** Because of faithful leadership in the southern kingdom, God would allow Judah to continue. The northern kingdom went into Assyrian captivity in 722/21 B.C. At the time of writing, however, Judah was also on a path to destruction, for she too was in the process of giving herself over to idol worship. Judah eventually went into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.

Chapter 12

THE FRUITFUL

BECOMES UNFRUITFUL

12:1-6 In this context, Hosea further reveals the culture of sin that plagued the northern kingdom. The people chased after the hot east wind, which if caught would sear them. They were burned with their own sin. **Covenant with the Assyrians:**

They paid tribute to the Assyrians in order to keep the Assyrians appeased. They made payments of goods to Egypt in order to secure an alliance with them against the Assyrians. Instead of relying on God for protection, they resorted to the political schemes with the nations around them. All such efforts were eventually futile. **Judah:** The southern kingdom was following in the way of her northern sister. Though it was not time for her captivity, she was warned by the punishment that befell Ephraim in her captivity. **Jacob:** Reference here is to all twelve tribes. All tribes would eventually be punished because of apostasy. The tribes were the children of their father, Jacob, who practiced deceit. Though judged for his sin, Jacob repented through supplication. He strove with God, and then made supplication to God (Gn 32:24-32). In the same manner Israel was striving against God, but could still repent. **Memorial name:** Jehovah God is everlasting and does not change. Because Jacob strove with God, his name was changed to Israel, the name by which all twelve tribes became known. God's memorial name is everlasting and eternal. It never changes, and thus Israel is asked to return to this immutable God who will deliver them for their future existence.

12:7-10 A merchant: Israel was a deceitful merchant who was seeking gain as a fraudulent trader. Her lust for wealth led her to be dishonest with those with whom she traded. Her ill-gotten gain, therefore, was a manifestation of her moral sickness. **Again make you dwell**

in tents: Israel's exile would be both punishment and a restoration to God. Her riches would be taken from her in captivity. In her poverty, however, she would be restored to faith in God. She would be restored to faith as she was during her wilderness wanderings when she initially came out of Egyptian captivity. Her punishment, therefore, would be for her salvation.

12:11-14 It was time for Israel to remember the past. God spoke through His prophets in order to rebuke and to remind them of their apostasy, and thus call them to repentance. He sought to call them back to His law. However, the people continued in their rebellion. Gilead and Gilgal became leading centers of idol worship. Hosea reminded them of their father Jacob (See Gn 29 – 31). He was a fugitive to Syria where he served Laban for his wife. *By a prophet:* God called Israel out of Egyptian captivity through Moses. He preserved the nation through the law that was delivered to them through Moses. But Israel rebelled, and thus provoked the Lord to anger. Israel's blood was upon her own shoulders. She would have to pay for her own sin by going into captivity.

Chapter 13

13:1-3 God gave birth to Israel. He preserved Israel. Their ingratitude through idol worship demanded their captivity, for they no longer represented the purpose for which they had been created as a nation. They were no longer a witness to the existence of God among the nations. In their state of apostasy,

they had given up the right to bring the Son of God into the world. Since they could no longer be identified as the people of God, then the fulfillment of prophecies to the fathers could not be fulfilled through them in their apostate state. They had lost their identity as the people through whom God was working in order to bring the Redeemer of all nations into the world. *Ephraim:* As the father of one of the tribes of Israel, Ephraim was a dominant personality. When he spoke, others trembled. Ephraim became the predominant tribe of the northern kingdom. However, Ephraim fell into the apostasy of Baal worship, and subsequently spiritually died. *Sin more and more:* Hosea sarcastically reveals the absurdity of their idolatry. They would make images with their silver. They kissed them as symbols of fertility. They bowed down to them for good fortune and imagined conversations with them concerning their future. The Israelites were as children who were driven by their own imagination of what their idols would do for them. *Cloud ... dew ... chaff ... smoke:* All these figures symbolize the brevity of Israel. She would pass away as an idolatrous nation, though be restored as a repentant remnant. The Israel that would pass away, however, would never again exist as an idolatrous nation. The repentant remnant would banish idolatry forever.

13:4-8 God takes them back to their birth as a nation. He reminded them of their deliverance from Egyptian captivity. He preserved them throughout the wilderness wanderings. He provided

them pasture for their flocks in order that they might live. But now that they had forsaken Him, He would become to them as the lion, leopard and bear. He would devour them through captivity in order to save from them a faithful remnant. His punishment was to bring them again to the truth that there is no other God but Jehovah God (Ex 20:3; Is 43:11).

13:9-11 *Destroyed yourself:* They were the victims of themselves. Years later they would look back on these words of Hosea with unbelief as to how ignorant they were in following after senseless idols. Their ingratitude for all that God had done deserved the punishment that He rendered to them. Their captivity was just punishment. ***Where now is your king:*** During the days of Samuel they cried out for a king (1 Sm 8:5). However, instead of leading them to God, their kings eventually led them away from God, beginning with Solomon. The northern kingdom, however, started with a king that led the people into idolatry. Jeroboam I set up idols that became the legacy of the worship of the northern kingdom. Since the kings led them away from God, after their return from captivity, they would never again be given a king on earth by God. During the time of Jesus' birth, Herod the Great, an Edomite, was made king over Israel by the Roman Empire. But he was not a God-anointed king.

13:12-14 *Bound up ... kept in store:* The sin was bound and stored up for punishment. ***Travailing woman:*** Israel was in the travail of sin and would give birth to a new nation (See Is 13:8; Mc 4:9,10).

The nation needed a paradigm shift to righteousness, but was unwilling to go through the social chaos that would produce a new nation. Therefore, God had to work among the nations in order to bring the Assyrians upon her, and thus through captivity the repentant remnant would come forth. ***I will ransom:*** What Israel deserved for their total apostasy from God was total destruction. Left alone, the nation would have suffered such at the hands of the Assyrians. Death sought her. Annihilation was at her door. Verse 14 pictures God at the brink of her total destruction from history, but at the last moment a remnant would be saved by His grace. However, in order to repeat God's grace the remnant would have to repent of their idol worship.

13:15,16 The generation to which these words were addressed would be totally destroyed. Only their children would realize any future hope of an existing Israel. Though Ephraim was fruitful, the hot east wind would come from Assyria twelve years after this oracle and dry up the well of Israel's prosperity and posterity. ***Plunder the treasure:*** That in which they took great pride would be taken away by the Assyrians. ***Samaria will become desolate:*** This is the end of a nation that forsook the God of her birth. Shalmaneser would bring his Assyrian army against the nation and the northern kingdom would come to a horrible conclusion of destruction and captivity. After over 700 years as God's people in the land of Palestine, the northern ten tribes came to an end in 722/21 B.C. when they went into captivity. They would stay in

captivity until the Medo-Persians overthrew the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C. In 539 B.C. King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire would allow Jewish captives to return to Palestine. Thus the northern ten tribes would be in captivity for 186 years before they were allowed the opportunity to return the land of their inheritance. And when they set free, only a remnant would return.

Repentance And Renewal

(14:1-9)

Outline: (1) Plea for repentance (14:1-3), (2) Promise of healing (14:4-8), (3) Admonition (14:9)

Chapter 14

PLEA FOR REPENTANCE

14:1-3 Hosea exhorted the people to repent and turn to God. Iniquity was what led them astray, and thus repentance of their sinful idolatry was necessary in order that they return to God. The conclusion of Hosea's message to the people, therefore, was a last call for repentance. There was still time to repent and save themselves from the captivity of Assyria. **Asshur:** Or, Assyria. Assyria would not spare them. Egypt with their mighty horses could not save them. The works of their hands (idols) were useless. Only in God was there salvation from the impending calamity.

14:4-8 God responded to the plea of verses 1-3. He responded with a message of hope. The response portrays the transformation that Israel would go through during their captivity. The picture seems to be the time during their

captivity when they repented of their idolatrous ways. When they repented, God received them back as His people. **Anger has turned away:** Their repentance turned God's anger away. In order to be a just God, God must pour out judgment on those who violate His law. Since all men sin (Rm 3:9,10,23), then only through grace can one have the judgment of God turned away. But His anger cannot justly be turned away until there is repentance. In order to enjoy the grace of God, and escape His judgment, one must live a repentant life (See comments 1 Jn 1:8-10). **Dew:** The figure is of God's loving care over them in a time of their calamity. They would sin, but God would always be there for their repentance. **He will grow:** Though they had suffered through the calamity of captivity, they would continue as a people beyond their captivity. **Smell as Lebanon:** They were previously stench in the nose of God while in their idolatrous state of apostasy. Now in repentance they had the sweet aroma of the cedars of Lebanon. They would spring forth in growth in captivity as grain germinates into a new vine. Their idols were dead pieces of wood. God was the one who answered their pleas. Their idols produced no fruit. All fruit came from God. Verse 9 is Hosea's conclusion. It is an address to those who would be wise in understanding the disciplinary ways of the Lord. Israel had forsaken God and turned to idols. It was just from Him to send them into captivity in order to generate repentance. If one would be wise, therefore, he will walk in the word of God. He will hun-

ger and thirst after the word of God. over the word of God and fall.
Transgressors, however, will stumble