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Chapter 1

1:1

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, We know nothing else about this man or his father. **in the days of Uzziah,** So we know this was before Isaiah 6:1. Isaiah (1:1) and Amos (Amos 1:1) prophesied during this man's reign (2 Chronicles 26). **Jotham,** Isaiah (1:1) and Micah (Micah 1:1) also ministered during this man's reign (2 Chronicles 27). **Ahaz,** Isaiah also ministered during his reign is covered in 2 Chronicles 28. **and Hezekiah,** Isaiah (1:1) and Micah (1:1) also ministered during his reign (2 Chronicles 29-32). **kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash,** This man is the son of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:10) who is the son of Jehu (2 Kings 13:1). This will be brought up in verse 3. **king of Israel.** Amos (Amos 1:1) also ministered during this reign (2 Kings 13-14).

This is the same way Luke uses to tell us about the timeframe of Jesus (Luke 2:1; 3:1). He associates his story with the rulers in charge at the time.

1:2

When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: “Go, take yourself a wife makes no sense to go get on e if it won't picture what God has already endured. of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD.” First, we know pieces of dirt don't commit sin. Therefore, we are talking about the inhabitants of the **land.** How do inhabitants of land **commit harlotry?** They do so by cheating on the LORD (James 4:4).

1:3-5

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, So a man and his father precede the man's wife and her father in never being mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. **and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the LORD said to him: “Call his name Jezreel, For in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu,** Jehu is the grandparent of the current king in Hosea's ministry. **And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.** While this seems a little strange, 1 Kings 16 indicates that God spoke to Jehu about the demise of the then king of Israel and his family. Elisha is told by Elijah to anoint Jehu as king of this same nation Israel. 2 Kings 9:6-7 furthermore records a prophet conveying to Jehu to carry out vengeance by the word of the Lord. 2 Kings 9:30 and following record the carrying out of this mandate. So, why is God wanting to avenge this bloodshed...particularly after He apparently approved of it (2 Kings 10:30)? One commentator says it is better seen as “punishment for not learning the lesson of Jezreel. Jehu himself had been the agent of God's fury and personally had seen how terribly it fell upon an apostate dynasty. But he and his household went on to repeat the apostasy of the Omrides and their predecessors.”¹ If one is faced with choosing between a contradiction in the Word of God or deciding there is an unknown principle of perpetuation that becomes active upon the failure to fulfill terms of a divine agreement, the choice seems easy (Jehu must have transgressed an agreement).

5 It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.” It appears, then, that the “harlotry of the land” (verse 2) is related to “bloodshed of Jezreel” and the “house of Jehu” (verse 4). It seems like 2 Kings 15:29 is the fulfillment of this promise through the hands of the king of Assyria.

1:6-11

6 And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: “Call her name ²Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away. 7 Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the LORD their God, And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword or battle, By horses or horsemen.” This was fulfilled in 2 Kings 19:29-35. **8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said: “Call his name ⁴Lo-Ammi, For you**

¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 57.

² Lit. *No-Mercy*

⁴ Lit. *Not-My-People*

are not My people, And I will not be your God. 10 “Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, in keeping with his promise to Abraham in Genesis 22 and to Jacob in Genesis 32. **Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are ⁵not My people,’** 1 Peter 2:10 leads the reader to believe that Peter either thought Gentile Christians were these **people** of God that were not before **people of God**, or that they were a shadow of an eventual, actual, ethnic fulfillment of this promise. Paul, on the other hand, makes no bones about this promise being fulfilled, in part (rather than merely a shadow) by Gentile believers (Romans 9:26). Israel will be destroyed, but then somehow...restored. A harlot restored. Strange. One might think that it is the God of Heaven in the Old Testament—angry and vindictive versus the sweet Heavenly Father of the New Testament. Obviously the God Who seeks to restore harlots in the O.T. seeks the same in the N.T. (as seen in Mark 2:13-17). His character is unchanging and so—even in so called dispensations of differing character—He cannot help but do “mighty works” that spring from His character.

There it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’ 11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, playing on the name “Jezreel” which means, of course, “sowing by scattering” **For great will be the day of Jezreel!** Here it is again. This geographical reference becomes a play on words to promise blessing from God out of a curse from God (1:4).

⁵ Heb. *lo-ammi*, v. 9

Chapter 2

2:1

Say to your brethren, ‘My people,’ And to your sisters, ‘Mercy is shown.’ A prophecy, then, of a reversal of 1:8. This is most certainly a broadcast through Hosea to his countrymen of the promise of God to Hosea given in the previous chapter. Basically, God is telling Hosea, “now tell what I’ve told you.”

2:2-4

“Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! This appears to be a promise of a pending divorce (as seen in the requirement laid upon her in the next verse and a half) which seems like was finally brought to pass in 2:16. **Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, And her adulteries from between her breasts; 3 Lest I strip her naked And expose her, as in the day she was born,** a sign of shame—as if to say “everything you have is because of me, and I will now take from you what you received freely from me.” **And make her like a wilderness, And set her like a dry land, And slay her with thirst. 4 “I will not have mercy on her children,** Is this, then, a reversal of the reversal (2:1 cross referenced with 1:8)? **For they are the children of harlotry.** Jehovah is not recognizing a relationship with the alliances that his wife has produced.

2:5-7

6 “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, And wall her in, So that she cannot find her paths. These, not Reformers, are the writings we should be considering who the “Great Whore” of the last times is. If it is a city besides the “City of God” in 1:5, it is something with which the proposed “end times” city has something in common. **7 She will chase her lovers, But not overtake them;** The LORD takes credit for not allowing Gomer (or Israel) to have what she’s looking for in her lovers.

2:8-13

8 For she did not ^kknow That I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, And multiplied her silver and gold— Which they prepared for Baal. It was me after all. I was the one who was to blame for “funding” her escapades. She didn’t know I was the source of all good things. **9 “Therefore I will return and take away My grain in its time And My new wine in its season, And will take back My wool and My linen,** famine keeps food from animals and then they die, depleting **wool and linen. Given to cover her nakedness. 10 Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers,** there will be shame for Israel. She will be stripped before her many lovers and shamed. **And no one shall deliver her from My hand.** Here’s the other “bookend of shame” on the other side of the talk of the wife “seeing how good she had it.” **11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, Her feast days,** signals of new seasons **Her New Moons,** signals of new months **Her Sabbaths** signals of new weeks—**All her appointed feasts.** This surely does remind me of Isaiah 1 (as in 2:8). **12 “And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, Of which she has said, ‘These are my wages that my lovers have given me.’** The LORD promises to spoil what so-called “good” is produced by these other **lovers.** Eventually, those glimmers will go away. **So I will make them a forest, And the beasts of the field shall eat them.** They will not admire Israel’s beauty. Rather, they will pillage and misuse her (This sure seems like the treatment of a certain “whore” in Revelation 17-18). **13 I will punish her For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry, And went after her lovers; But Me she forgot,” says the LORD.** Can you hear the heartbreak of Jehovah? Apparently, omniscience does not dispense with personality.

2:14-18

14 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak comfort to her. This is not what I would do, on one hand. On the other hand, I feel a great jealousy over those in my pastoral care who seem to be growing distant from the things of God. They have wronged God, and I feel wronged on God’s behalf. Do I wait for them to come back and stand here with my arms folded? No, I pray desperately for them and then yearn for restoration...for something I didn’t do! **15 I will give her her vineyards from there,**

^k Is. 1:3; Ezek. 16:19

And ⁿthe Valley of Achor as a door of hope; Is this really a reference to 400 years earlier? How could this valley bring hope? **She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.** This is most certainly a reference to Exodus 15.

16 “And it shall be, in that day,” Says the LORD, “That you will call Me ⁸‘My Husband,’ And no longer call Me ‘My Master,’ I will buy you as a **Master**, but treat you like a **Husband**. **17 For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,** This has intimate intimations. We are dealing with calling out the names of lovers. **And they shall be remembered by their name no more. 18 In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,** “Life will be good again in the promised land. Normal again, with your seasons and months and weeks (2:11). **To make them lie down safely.** Amazing...He wishes to win her back...to keep her safe.

2:19-23

19 “I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness a remarriage with a forever ending. **and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy; 20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,** Once again, there is a connection here with Mark. Hosea 1 to Mark 2. Now Hosea 2 to Mark 2—specifically Mark 2:20. It is within the character of God to remarry Israel...in Jesus’ economy, new Israel. **And ⁿyou shall know the LORD.**

21 “It shall come to pass in that day That I will answer,” says the LORD; “I will answer the heavens, And they shall answer the earth. The heavens speak with rain and the earth response: **22 The earth shall answer With grain, With new wine, And with oil; They shall answer ¹Jezreel.** So this is more than the name of a son. This is the nature of a restoration of the “harlot” people of God, specifically—ethnic Israel (generally speaking). **23 Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had ²not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were ³not My people, ‘You are ⁴My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’ ”** Looking ahead to Mark 2:18-22, one can readily see that Jesus’ frequent analogy to marriages and weddings in the Gospels reintroduces that God is about to be involved with a marriage once again.

ⁿ Josh. 7:26

⁸ Heb. *Ishi*

^uJer. 31:33, 34

¹ Lit. *God Will Sow*

² Heb. *lo-ruhamah*

³ Heb. *lo-ammi*

⁴ Heb. *ammi*

Chapter 3

3:1

Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, As we saw the remarriage of God to Israel in the last chapter, Hosea is now going to demonstrate it with his wife...who has apparently left and been “put away” in like manner. **love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery,** She did what she was doing when he found her.

3:2-5

2 So I Hosea speaks in the first person for first time. One might wonder why the drastic change from 3rd person in chapter 1. **bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.** Many are not sure what this really means since we’re not sure what a “homer” really is.² The main thing is to see that the cost was that of “worthlessness:” **barley** for a woman.³ **3 And I said to her, “You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you.”** Hosea seems to be saying that he is not going to approach her as a husband just yet: intimacy is not immediately expected. 2:16 gives us the reality that when Hosea buys Gomer in 3:4 it is a master/slave relationship and not a husband/wife relationship. Verse 4 is a development of this reality. **4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.** There will be minimal opportunity to worship outwardly—unrighteously or otherwise. **5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king.** Certainly, there is reason to wonder whether this is actually the return of **David** or if it may be fulfilled genetically in His Son, Jesus (Romans 1:3). **They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.**

² Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 100.

³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 652.

Chapter 4

4:4-5

“Now let no man contend, or rebuke another; For your people are like those who contend with the priest. 5 Therefore you shall stumble in the day; The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; And I will destroy your mother. This is pretty well promised the first time in chapter 3:2-3.

4:6-9

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Nehemiah 8 confirms that it was the priest and the Levite who were responsible for the knowledge of the Scripture to be known among the people. **Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me;** Mark 14:63 is telltale here. God rejected the High Priest (and by extension, the temple and the priesthood) in view of Leviticus 21:10. They rejected Christ, and God rejected them. It is the unchanging character of God that gives us our third connection to the Gospel of Mark. Mark 12:9 also takes the liberty (as does Matthew) of telling us that God has taken the kingdom from a nation that should have had it (as led by its priests and prophets, Hosea 4:4-5) and giving it to others (by virtue of their King, the Christ).

8 They eat up the sin of My people; They set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And it shall be: like people, like priest. This reminds the reader of Ezekiel 16:44: “like mother; like daughter” **So I will punish them for their ways, And reward them for their deeds.** The complaint continues in 5:1.

4:10-13

For they shall eat, but not have enough; They shall commit harlotry, but not increase; Because they have ceased obeying the LORD. 11 “Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. Thus says Proverbs 20:1 and Habakkuk 2:15 to some degree. To what do they drive their enslaved? **12 My people ask counsel from their wooden idols,** This baffles the Psalmist of Psalm 115.

13 They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops, And burn incense on the hills, Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, Because their shade is good. It doesn't take much...just need some nice shade, and we whore.

4:14-15

14 “I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry, Nor your brides when they commit adultery; They're just doing what they were taught to do from you. For the men themselves go apart with harlots, And offer sacrifices with a ritual harlot. Therefore people who do not understand will be trampled. 15 “Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Let not Judah offend. Judah was saved from Israel's doom, and they should be thusly warned. **Do not come up to Gilgal,**

...it appears that the Gilgal of this verse is the location near the Jordan that Joshua made his first base of operations after crossing into Canaan (Josh 4:19). There the men of the nation were circumcised in preparation for Israel's first Passover in the land (Josh 5:7–12), and from there Jericho was taken. Gilgal was on Samuel's annual circuit (1 Sam 7:16), and it is the setting for much of the story of Samuel and Saul (e.g., 1 Sam 11:14–15). The people of Judah welcomed David back at Gilgal after the war with Absalom (2 Sam 19:15). A group of Elisha's disciples resided there (2 Kgs 4:38). Thus one can say that Gilgal was a place of great significance in the spiritual history of Israel, and the people had every reason to consider it sacred. Unfortunately, it went from being a shrine for pilgrims to a center of apostasy, and by the eighth century not only Hosea but Amos as well was counseling people to stay away from there (Amos 4:4; 5:5).⁴

Nor go up to Beth ⁸Aven, Nor swear an oath, saying, ‘As the LORD lives’—

⁴Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary, 136.

⁸Lit. *House of Idolatry or Wickedness*

Beth Aven is almost certainly Bethel; Amos also associates Gilgal with Bethel, and employing the same pun that Hosea uses, he declares that Bethel would become “nothing” (’āwen). Amos ministered in the reigns of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel and thus overlaps and slightly precedes Hosea. It appears that Amos’s use of this wordplay is original, and that Hosea is following patterns Amos had already set.¹⁰⁸

Bethel was, if anything, even more sacred than Gilgal. Abraham camped there (Gen 12:8), and while sleeping there Jacob saw his vision of the stairway into heaven and gave the place its name, “house of God” (bêt-’ēl; Gen 28:11–18; 31:1–15). Later God revealed himself to Jacob as the “God of Bethel” (Gen 31:13)...⁵

4:16-19

16 “For Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn calf; Now the LORD will let them forage Like a lamb in open country. 17 “Ephraim Used 32 out of the 180 Old Testament times right here in this prophet (this being the first). This should alert the reader to the uniqueness with which Hosea is using the term. If Amos and Isaiah are his peers, and it was usage specific to their time we would expect a similar density of usage, but Isaiah uses it a mere 11 times in 66 chapters while Amos uses it none at all. What do we say of all this? Perhaps **Ephraim**, as one of the ten tribes of the north is used as the shorthand title for “the ten tribes of Israel” like “Judah” is already used as shorthand for “the southern two tribes of Benjamin and Judah?” This seems reasonable.⁶

is joined to idols, Let him alone. This takes one to Matthew 15:14 where Jesus gives particular attention to “leave alone” certain who lead the blind. Is there a connection here? **18 Their drink is rebellion, They commit harlotry continually. Her rulers dearly love dishonor. 19 The wind has wrapped her up in its wings,** This could have reference to the “swiftness with which she was judged” or the “thoroughness with which she was carried away” or the “fickleness of a people so easily stirred by the winds of change.” **And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.** They will see just how ridiculous their works really were.

¹⁰⁸ Also the use of the threefold warning, so significant in Hosea’s literary setting, seems to be adapted from Amos (see, e.g., Amos 5:5).

⁵Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, 136.

⁶1 Kings 12:21-23 should satisfy anybody’s doubt as to the division assumed in this paragraph.

Chapter 5

5:1-2

“Hear this, O priests! Take heed, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For yours is the judgment, who owns this calamity? The priests! Because you have been a snare to Mizpah And a net spread on Tabor.

*As Mizpah and Tabor mean a “watch tower,” and a “lofty place,” a fit scene for hunters, **playing on the words, the prophet implies, in the lofty place in which I have set you, whereas ye ought to have been the watchers of the people, guarding them from evil, ye have been as hunters entrapping them into it.***⁷ *These two places are specified, Mizpah in the east and Tabor in the west, to include the high places throughout the whole kingdom, in which Israel’s rulers set up idolatrous altars.*⁸

5:3-7

3 I know Ephraim, And Israel is not hidden from Me; For now, O Ephraim, you commit harlotry; a repetition of the them introduced in 4:17.

Israel is defiled. 4 “They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God, To what degree this Scripture played in Paul’s words of Acts 20:28, it would be interesting to tell. **For the spirit of harlotry carried on from 4:12 is in their midst...5 The pride of Israel testifies to his face; Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also stumbles with them.** A prophecy of the impressionable Judah begins. **6 “With their flocks and herds They shall go to seek the LORD, But they will not find Him; He has withdrawn Himself from them.** Proverbs 1:25-28 speaks of this in deep measure. Consider also the Song of Solomon 5:1-3. This is also a theme carried through in the life of Esau (Hebrews 12). **7 They have dealt treacherously with the LORD, For they have begotten pagan children.** Offspring of adulterous relationships become binding covenants and entangling relationships which foster idolatry and last for generations. **Now a New Moon shall devour them and their heritage. New Moons** introduce new months—which imply months which have just passed. Could it be that there were deadlines they missed and loans came due?

5:8-15

“Blow the ram’s horn in Gibeah, The trumpet in Ramah! Cry aloud at Beth Aven, Introduced in chapter 4 with a warning to not approach this town appears to be an acknowledgement that they have indeed done so. **‘Look behind you, O Benjamin!’** a lesser section of the southern kingdom?

13 “When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah saw his wound, Is this my linkage to Mark? Is Mark 8:31 an ultimate fulfillment to “Judah’s wound?” **Then Ephraim went to Assyria And sent to King Jareb; Yet he cannot cure you, Nor heal you of your wound.** Then who can heal Judah’s wound? Perhaps the close proximity to Hosea 6:1-2 is the license. **14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,** After all, being a moth which simply bothers you a little didn’t work (5:12). **And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away;** Here we find a great connection with Mark 12:1-9 where God the Father goes away and sends many in his stead on the way to sending His own heir/son.⁹ It ends when He approaches like a lion and tears up the city. **I will take them away, and no one shall rescue. 15 I will return again to My place** echoing verse 6.

⁷Apparently the words of Jerome, says the commentator.

⁸Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](#), vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 653–654.

⁹2 Kings 15:19

⁸Psalm 50:22; See appendix B of my commentary on the Gospel of Matthew for an overview of this wonderful Psalm.

⁹Also seen in Hebrews 1:1-2.

Chapter 6

6:1-3

Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, like the lion of 5:14.

2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

This is quite probably the answer to 1 Corinthians 15:3 and “according to the Scriptures.” As it relates to the Gospels, one can certainly understand why the apostles were in the dark if this was the extent of their Old Testament passages on the resurrection (Mark 8:31).¹⁰

3 Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. “Knowledge and the fear of the Lord” are the payoff for this search (Proverbs 2:5). **His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain** or early and later spring rains **to the earth.** We now know that this refers to the 1st and 2nd comings of Christ (based on James 5:7-8).

6:4-7

4 “O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away. A reminder of their unified idolatry is here re-emphasized. **5 Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth;** This reminds the reader of Jesus promise to “bring a sword” to His own people (Matthew 10:34-35). Think also of the “man of sin” being “destroyed” with the “spirit of the mouth” of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2) or Jesus coming with a sword proceeding from His mouth (Revelation 19). **And your judgments are like light that goes forth.**

6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, Another place where God prefers something more than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22-23). **And the knowledge of God** Given the context of 2:20, this appears to have an understood “intimate” knowledge and is again quite marital in its connotation. **more than burnt offerings.** This is, again, quoted in Matthew 9:13 & 12:7 and shows the unchanging character of God.

7 There they dealt treacherously with Me. This is a repeated charge from 5:7 and seems to have an O.T. connotation of marital unfaithfulness (Malachi 2:15).

6:8-10

Gilead is a city of evildoers And defiled with blood. This city is mentioned only one other time in Hosea and it occurs later on. Meanwhile, this verse and the next seem to indicate that the murdering priests (who are named as such because they “destroy their people by withholding knowledge, 4:2-6) appear to have done some of their so-called “ministry” there. **9 As bands of robbers lie in wait for a man, So the company of priests murder on the way to Shechem;** A repeat of the theme mentioned in 5:2.¹¹ These places must surely be places of pagan worship given the priestly references. **Shechem** is otherwise translated “by consent” in other translations and surely that is the translation of this well-known geographical setting.¹²

These priests are accused of **murder** as they were accused of “destroying the people” in 4:6. Surely **they commit lewdness.** **10 I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel: There is the harlotry of Ephraim;** of the James 4:4 variety.

6:11

Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you, When I return the captives of My people. Experienced in Psalm 137:1-2 in the immediate fulfillment, but well understood to have a final fulfillment (Ezekiel 37).

¹⁰This and all other Matthew references in this chapter are expounded in my commentary on Matthew (chapter 16).

¹¹A reminder of the criticism of the “hireling” who flees the wolf, leaving the sheep to their certain death, seeking His own self-interest: He becomes a murderer (John 10:1-10).

¹²“Hosea 6:11 (KJV) - Also O Judah he hath.” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 5 May, 2017.
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/hos/6/11/t_conc_868009>.

Chapter 7

7:1-4

1 “When I would have healed Israel, Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, God here says He would have restored them sooner if they were willing, but they were simply so shameful. **And the wickedness of Samaria. For** ^athey have committed fraud; **A thief comes in; A band of robbers takes spoil outside. 2 They do not consider in their hearts That** ^bI remember all their wickedness; **Now their own deeds have surrounded them; They are before My face.** “They’re right here! Before me! I see it all!” **3 They make a** ^cking glad with their wickedness, **And princes with their lies. 4 “They are all adulterers. Like an oven heated by a baker— He ceases stirring the fire after kneading the dough, Until it is leavened.**

7:5-7

5 In the day of our king Princes have made him sick, inflamed with wine; He stretched out his hand with scoffers. 6 They prepare their heart like an oven, While they lie in wait; Their baker sleeps all night; In the morning it burns like a flaming fire. 7 They are all hot, like an oven, And have devoured their judges; All their kings have fallen. ^eNone among them calls upon Me.

7:8-16

8 “Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned. 9 ⁱAliens have devoured his strength, But he does not know it; If Ephraim only knew how much they were being abused... Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him, Yet he does not know it. 10 And the ^jpride of Israel testifies to his face, But they do not return to the LORD their God, Nor seek Him for all this. 11 “Ephraim ^lalso is like a silly dove, without sense—They call to Egypt, They go to ⁿAssyria. 12 Wherever they go, I will spread My net on them; I will bring them down like birds of the air; I will chastise them According to what their congregation has heard. 13 “Woe to them, for they have fled from Me! Destruction to them, Because they have transgressed against Me! Though I redeemed them, Yet they have spoken lies against Me. A very clear connection to the Gospel of Mark, particularly 3:20-30 where the scribes—who are emblematic of the Israelite people—have little hesitation to lie about their “redeemer.” 14 They did not cry out to Me with their heart When they wailed upon their beds. “They assemble together for grain and new wine, They rebel against Me; 15 Though I disciplined *and* strengthened their arms, Yet they devise evil against Me; 16 They return, *but* not to the Most High; They are like a treacherous bow. Their princes shall fall by the sword For the cursings of their tongue. This *shall be* their derision ^vin the land of Egypt.

^aHos. 5:1

^bHos. 8:13; 9:9

^cHos. 1:1

^eIs. 64:7

ⁱHos. 8:7

^jHos. 5:5-7

^lHos. 11:11

ⁿHos. 5:13; 8:9

^vHos. 8:13; 9:3

Chapter 8

8:1

“Set the ¹trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the LORD, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.

8:2-10

2 ^bIsrael will cry to Me, ‘My God, we know You!’ 3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him. 4 “They ^dset up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them. From their silver and gold They made idols for themselves—That they might be cut off. 5 Your ²calf is rejected, O Samaria! My anger is aroused against them—How long until they attain to innocence? 6 For from Israel is even this: A workman made it, and it is not God; But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces. 7 “They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind. Far worse than the “law of the harvest” in Galatians 6:7-9. The stalk has no bud; It shall never produce meal. If it should produce, ^hAliens would swallow it up. 8 Israel is swallowed up; Now they are among the Gentiles Like a vessel in which is no pleasure. 9 For they have gone up to Assyria, Like ^ka wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers. 10 Yes, though they have hired among the nations, Now I will gather them; And they shall sorrow a little, Because of the ⁵burden of the king of princes.

8:11-13

11“Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin, They have become for him altars for sinning. 12 I have written for him the great things of My law, But they were considered a strange thing. Imagine holding God’s instruction at an arm’s length out of suspicion. 13 For the sacrifices of My offerings they sacrifice flesh and eat it, ^qBut the LORD does not accept them. ^rNow He will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. They shall return to Egypt.

8:14

“For ^sIsrael has forgotten his Maker, And has built temples; Judah also has multiplied fortified cities; But I will send fire upon his cities, And it shall devour his palaces.”

¹ ram’s horn, Heb. *shophar*

^bHos. 5:15; 7:14

^dHos. 13:10, 11

² Golden calf image

^h Hos. 7:9

^k Hos. 7:11; 12:1

⁵ Or *oracle* or *proclamation*

^qHos. 6:6; 9:4

^rHos. 9:9

^sHos. 2:13; 4:6; 13:6

Chapter 9

9:1-2

1 Do ^anot rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, For you have played the harlot against your God. You have made love for hire on every threshing floor. Now we see the scandal behind what Ruth actually did in the book that bears her name. 2 The threshing floor and the winepress Shall not feed them, And the new wine shall fail in her.

9:3-6

3 They shall not dwell in the LORD's land, ^dBut Ephraim shall return to Egypt, And shall eat unclean things in Assyria. 4 They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, Nor shall their ^esacrifices be pleasing to Him. It shall be like bread of mourners to them; All who eat it shall be defiled. For their bread shall be for their own life; It shall not come into the house of the LORD. 5 What will you do in the appointed day, And in the day of the feast of the LORD? 6 For indeed they are gone because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up; Memphis shall bury them. ^hNettles shall possess their valuables of silver; Thorns shall be in their tents.

9:7-10

7 The days of punishment have come; The days of recompense have come. Israel knows! The prophet is a fool, The spiritual man is insane, Because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity. 8 The watchman of Ephraim is with my God; But the prophet is a ^lfowler's snare in all his ways—Enmity in the house of his God. 9 ^mThey are deeply corrupted, As in the days of ⁿGibeah. He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins. 10 "I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to ^qBaal Peor, And separated themselves to that shame; They became an abomination like the thing they loved.

9:11-17

11 As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird—No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception! 12 Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them to the last man. Yes, ^swoe to them when I depart from them! 13 Just as I saw Ephraim like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place, So Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer." 14 Give them, O LORD—What will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb And dry breasts! 15 "All their wickedness is in ^vGilgal, For there I hated them. God hated His people? Whoa! Let's think about that. Perhaps we should be careful before we make "His people" purely ethnic? Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more. ^wAll their princes are rebellious. 16 Ephraim is ^xstricken, Their root is dried up; They shall bear no fruit. Yes, were they to bear children, I would kill the darlings of their womb." 17 My God will cast them away, Because they did not obey Him; And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

^aHos. 10:5

^dHos. 7:16; 8:13

^eHos. 8:13

^hHos. 10:8

^l One who catches birds in a trap or snare

^m Hos. 10:9

ⁿ Judg. 19:22

^q Num. 25:3; Ps. 106:28

^sHos. 7:13

^vHos. 4:15; 12:11

^wHos. 5:2

^xHos. 5:11

Chapter 10

10:1-4

1 Israel empties his vine; He brings forth fruit for himself. According to the multitude of his fruit ^bHe has increased the altars; According to the bounty of his land They have embellished his sacred pillars. **2** Their heart is ^cdivided; Now they are held guilty. He will break down their altars; He will ruin their sacred pillars. **3** For now they say, “We have no king, Because we did not fear the LORD. And as for a king, what would he do for us?” **4** They have spoken words, Swearing falsely in making a covenant. Thus judgment springs up like hemlock in the furrows of the field.

10:5-6

5 The inhabitants of Samaria fear Because of the ^ecalf² of Beth Aven. For its people mourn for it, And its priests shriek for it—Because its ^fglory has departed from it. This really heightens the sense to which God despised His own tabernacle in 1 Samuel 4 when “the glory departed.” **6** The idol also shall be carried to Assyria As a present for King ^gJareb. Ephraim shall receive shame, And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

10:7-10

7 As for Samaria, her king is cut off Like a twig on the water. **8** Also the ^hhigh places of ⁴Aven, the sin of Israel, Shall be destroyed. The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars; ^jThey shall say to the mountains, “Cover us!” And to the hills, “Fall on us!” **9** “O Israel, you have sinned from the days of ^kGibeah; There they stood. The ^lbattle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity Did not overtake them. **10** When it is My desire, I will chasten them. Peoples shall be gathered against them When I bind them for their two transgressions.

10:11-14

11 Ephraim is ⁿa trained heifer That loves to thresh grain; But I harnessed her fair neck, I will make Ephraim pull a plow. Judah shall plow; Jacob shall break his clods.” **12** Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; ^oBreak up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He ^pcomes and rains righteousness on you. **13** ^qYou have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way, In the multitude of your mighty men. **14** Therefore tumult shall arise among your people, And all your fortresses shall be plundered As Shalman plundered Beth Arbel in the day of battle—A mother dashed in pieces upon her children.

10:15

Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, Because of your great wickedness. At dawn the king of Israel Shall be cut off utterly.

^bHos. 8:11; 12:11

^cMatt. 6:24

^eHos. 8:5, 6; 13:2

²Lit. *calves*, images

^fHos. 9:11

^gHos. 5:13

^hHos. 4:15

⁴Lit. *Idolatry* or *Wickedness*

^jIs. 2:19; Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:16

^kHos. 9:9

^lJudg. 20

ⁿHos. 4:16

^oJer. 4:3

^pHos. 6:3

^qJob 4:8; Gal. 6:7, 8]

Chapter 11

11:1-4

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt ^aI called My ^bson. 2 As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images. 3 “I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them. 4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. ^gI stooped and fed them.

11:5-6

5 “He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, Because they refused to repent. 6 And the sword shall slash in his cities, Devour his districts, And consume them, Because of their own counsels.

11:7-9

My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him. 8 “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. 9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.

11:10-11

“They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. The LORD had previously threatened to come upon them as a lion. Now it is not a threat; it is rather a comfort. **When He roars, Then His sons shall come trembling from the west; 11 They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, ^mLike a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses,” Says the LORD.**

11:12

“Ephraim has encircled Me with lies, And the house of Israel with deceit; But Judah still walks with God, **Even with the Holy One who is faithful.** Interesting that the writer speaks of Judah being faithful with the word **still** only to draw a line to the **faithful Holy One.**

^aMatt. 2:15

^bEx. 4:22, 23

^gEx. 16:32; Ps. 78:25

^mHos. 7:11

Chapter 12

12:1

“Ephraim ^afeeds on the wind, And pursues the east wind; He daily increases lies and desolation. ^bAlso they make a covenant with the Assyrians, And oil is carried to Egypt.

12:2-5

“The ^dLORD also brings a charge against Judah, And will punish Jacob according to his ways; According to his deeds He will recompense him. ³ He took his brother ^eby the heel in the womb, And in his strength he ^fstruggled with God. ⁴ Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in ^gBethel, And there He spoke to us—⁵ That is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name.

12:6

ⁱSo you, by the help of your God, return; Observe mercy and justice, And wait on your God continually.

12:7-11

“A cunning ⁴Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress. ⁸ And Ephraim said, ^k“Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; In all my labors They shall find in me no iniquity that is sin.” ⁹ “But I am the LORD your God, Ever since the land of Egypt; I will again make you dwell in tents, As in the days of the appointed feast. ¹⁰ I have also spoken by the prophets, And have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets.” ¹¹ Though ⁿGilead has idols—Surely they are vanity—Though they sacrifice bulls in ^oGilgal, Indeed their altars shall be heaps in the furrows of the field.

12:12-13

Jacob ^pfled to the country of Syria; ^qIsrael served for a spouse, And for a wife he tended sheep. ¹³ By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, And by a prophet he was preserved.

12:14

Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly; Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his bloodshed upon him, And return his reproach upon him.

^aHos. 8:7

^bHos. 8:9

^dHos. 4:1

^eGen. 25:26

^fGen. 32:24–28

^gGen. 28:12–19; 35:9–15

ⁱ Hos. 14:1

⁴Or *merchant*

^kHos. 13:6; Rev. 3:17

ⁿ Hos. 6:8

^o Hos. 4:15; 9:15

^p Gen. 28:5; Deut. 26:5

^q Gen. 29:20, 28

Chapter 13

13:1-3

When Ephraim spoke, trembling, He exalted himself in Israel; But when he offended through Baal worship, he died. 2 Now they sin more and more, And have made for themselves molded images, Idols of their silver, according to their skill; All of it is the work of craftsmen. They say of them, “Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!” 3 Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud And like the early dew that passes away, ^aLike chaff blown off from a threshing floor And like smoke from a chimney.

13:4-8

“Yet ^bI am the LORD your God Ever since the land of Egypt, And you shall know no God but Me; 2:20 For ^cthere is no savior besides Me. 5 I knew you in the wilderness, In the land of great drought. 6 When they had pasture, they were filled; They were filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they forgot Me. “I made life easy on them, and they forgot me.” 7 “So ^gI will be to them like a lion; Like a leopard by the road I will lurk; This sounds strangely like 5:14 and it’s succeeding 6:2. It is an even more striking parallel when one reads 14:4. 8 I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs; I will tear open their rib cage, And there I will devour them like a lion. The wild beast shall tear them.

13:9-11

“O Israel, you are destroyed, But your help is from Me. 10 ^hI will be your King; Where is any other, That he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes’? 11 ⁱI gave you a king in My anger, And took him away in My wrath.

13:12-15

“The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; His sin is stored up. 13 The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him. He is an unwise son, For he should not stay long where children are born. 14 “I will ransom them from the power of ¹the grave; I will redeem them from death. ^oO Death, ²I will be your plagues! O ³Grave, ⁴I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes. 15 Though he is fruitful among his brethren, An east wind shall come; The wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness. Then his spring shall become dry, And his fountain shall be dried up. He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize.

13:16

Samaria ⁵is held guilty, For she has ^rrebelled against her God. They shall fall by the sword, Their infants shall be dashed in pieces, And their women with child ^sripped open.

^a Ps. 1:4

^b Is. 43:11

^c Is. 43:11; 45:21, 22

^gHos. 5:14

^hLXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *Where is your king?*

¹ Sam. 8:7; 10:17–24

¹Or *Sheol*

^o1 Cor. 15:54, 55

²LXX *where is your punishment?*

³Or *Sheol*

⁴LXX *where is your sting?*

⁵LXX *shall be disfigured*

^r2 Kin. 18:12

^s2 Kin. 15:16

Chapter 14

14:1-3

O Israel, ^areturn to the LORD your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity; 2 Take words with you, “At this point, it’s all you have.” And return to the LORD. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the ^bsacrifices¹ of our lips. 3 Assyria shall ^cnot save us, We will not ride on horses, Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, ‘You are our gods.’ For in You the fatherless finds mercy.”

14:4-8

“I will heal their backsliding, This is the “healing” we all need. It leads to the lion’s tear (5:14-6:2) and is, therefore, responsible for the damage. I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from him. 5 I will be like the dew to Israel; He shall grow like the lily, And lengthen his roots like Lebanon. 6 His branches shall spread; His beauty shall be like an olive tree, And his fragrance like Lebanon. 7 Those who dwell under his shadow shall return; They shall be revived like grain, And grow like a vine. Their scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon. 8 “Ephraim shall say, ‘What have I to do anymore with idols?’ I have heard and observed him. I am like a green cypress tree; ¹Your fruit is found in Me.”

14:9

Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right; The righteous walk in them, But transgressors stumble in them.

^aHos. 12:6

^bPs. 51:16, 17; Hos. 6:6; Heb. 13:15

¹Lit. *bull calves*; LXX *fruit*

^cHos. 7:11; 10:13; 12:1

¹John 15:4