

Hosea

Introduction

¹ The LORD's message to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah and during the reign of King Jeroboam, son of Joash of Israel.

The adultery of Hosea's wife

² When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, he said to him:

“Go marry an unfaithful woman who will bear you children by her adultery, for like an adulterous wife the land is unfaithful to the LORD.”

³ So he married Gomer, the daughter of Dibliah, and when she conceived and bore him a son, ⁴ the LORD said:

“Call him ‘Jezreel,’ for in a little while I will punish the dynasty of Jehu for the blood shed at the valley of Jezreel, I will cause the kingdom of Israel to cease.

⁵ On that day, I will break Israel's bows and arrows in the valley of Jezreel.”

⁶ When she conceived again and bore a daughter, the LORD said to Hosea:

“Call her Lo-Ruhamah – ‘No-Compassion’ for I will no longer have compassion on Israel, certainly not spare them.

⁷ But on Judah I will have compassion, I will deliver them by the LORD their God,

but I will not deliver them by bow nor by sword,
nor by battle nor by horses nor by horsemen.”

⁸ After she had weaned No-Compassion, and
when she conceived and bore a son, he said:

⁹ “Call him Lo-Ammi – ‘Not-My-People’
for you, Israel, are not my people,
and I indeed am not your God.”

¹⁰ Yet the number of the Israelites
will be as the sand of the sea,
which cannot be measured or counted,
and where they were told, “You are not my people,”

they will be called, “children of the living God.”

¹¹ The Judeans and the Israelites
will join together again,
will appoint for themselves one leader,
will return to their own land.
Great will be the day of Jezreel!

2

¹ So call your brothers, My People,
and your sisters, Compassion.

² Accuse, accuse your mother:
for she is not my wife,
and I will not be her husband.
Let her put her acts of infidelity out of her sight,
and her lovers from between her breasts,

³ else I will strip her bare,
expose her as she was on the day of her birth,
make her like the wilderness,
let her become like a parched land,
and let her die of thirst.

⁴ And on her children I will have no pity,
since they are children of adultery,
⁵ for their mother has become a prostitute,
she who conceived them has behaved shamefully.

She has said,
“I will go after my lovers
who gave me my bread and my water,
my wool, my flax, my oil, and my drink.”
⁶ That is why I am going to hedge up her ways with
thorns,
and build a wall about her,
so that she cannot find her paths.

⁷ She will pursue her lovers,
but will not overtake them.
She will seek them,
but not find them.
In time she will say,
“I will go back to my first husband,
I was better off then than now.”

⁸ She herself did not know
that it was I who gave her
the grain, the sweet wine, and the oil,
who lavished on her silver and gold –
that they used in worshipping Baal!

⁹ So I will take back my grain at the harvest,
and my sweet wine in its season.
I will withdraw my wool and my flax,
given to cover her nakedness;

¹⁰ and so I will strip her naked before her lovers,
and no one shall deliver her out of my hand.

¹¹ I will end all her celebrations,
her yearly feasts, her new moons, and her sab-
baths,

all her festivals.

¹² I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,
of which she says, “These are my wages
which my lovers have given me.”

I will make them a thicket,
and the wild animals will eat them.

¹³ In this way I will punish her for the days of the
Baals,
in which she made offerings to them,
and decked herself with earrings and jewels,
and went after her lovers,
but forgot me,
– declares the LORD.

¹⁴ So I am going to court her,
bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.

¹⁵ I will give her from there her vineyards,
and the valley of Achor as a door of hope.
There she will respond as in the days of her youth,
as in the days when she came up from the land of
Egypt.

¹⁶ At that time, declares the LORD,
you will call me your husband,
and will no more call me your master.

¹⁷ I will remove the name of the Baals from her
mouth,
their names never again uttered.

¹⁸ On that day I will make for them a covenant
with the wild animals,
the birds of the sky,
and the creatures that crawl on the earth.
I will break the bow and the sword,
banish battle from the land,

and I will make them lie down in safety.

¹⁹ I will take you for my wife forever,
I will take you for my wife in righteousness,
in justice, in kindness, and in mercy.

²⁰ I will take you for my wife in faithfulness,
and you will know the LORD.

²¹ On that day I will answer
– declares the LORD,
I will answer the empty skies,
and they will answer the dry earth.

²² The earth will answer with grain,
and new wine and oil,
and they will answer Jezreel,

²³ and I will plant her in the land.
I will have compassion to No-Compassion,
I will say to Not-My-People, “You are my people,”
and they will say, “You are my God.”

3

¹ Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, show love to this woman, who is loved by another, who commits adultery. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods, and love the raisin cakes offered to idols.

² So I redeemed her for fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a letheke of barley. ³ And I told her, “You must live with me for many days and you must not sleep around or marry another. And I will do the same for you.

⁴ And like this the Israelites will live for a long time without king and without prince, without sacrifice and without pillar, without ephod and

without teraphim. ⁵ Yet afterward the Israelites will return, and seek the LORD their God and their Davidic king, and in the days to come they will turn with awe to the LORD and his goodness.

4

The Lord's case against Israel

¹ Hear the LORD's message, Israelites,
for the LORD has brought charges against the inhabitants of the land,

for there is no fidelity, nor true love,
nor knowledge of God in the land,

² but cursing, lying, and murder,
stealing, committing adultery, and deeds of violence,

and acts of bloodshed quickly follow each other.

³ Therefore the land mourns,
all its inhabitants languish,
the wild animals and the birds of the skies,
even the fish of the sea are dying.

⁴ Yet let no one bring charges,
let none accuse,
for your people are like those,
who bring charges against a priest*.

⁵ You stumble by day,
and the prophet stumbles with you by night,
and I will destroy your mother.

⁶ My people are being destroyed for lack of knowledge;

because you have rejected knowledge
I reject you from being priest to me.

* **4:4** Heb. uncertain.

Since you have forgotten the teaching of your God,
I also will forget your children.

⁷ The more priests there are, the more they sin
against me.

I will change their dignity to dishonor.

⁸ They feed on the sin offerings of my people,
so they hunger after their guilt.

⁹ Thus it comes to be, like people, like priest:
I will visit upon each punishment for their ways,
and their deeds I will repay them.

¹⁰ They will eat and not be satisfied,
they will sleep around but stay childless,
because they have abandoned the LORD
to give themselves to ¹¹ prostitution.

Old and new wine take away the understanding.

¹² My own people ask counsel of a piece of wood!
A stick gives them advice!

For a spirit of prostitution has led them astray,
they commit adultery against their God.

¹³ On the heights of the mountains they sacrifice,
and on the hills they burn incense
under oaks and poplars and terebinths,
for their shade is so pleasant.

Therefore your daughters become cult prostitutes,
and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters for committing
prostitution,
nor your daughters-in-law for adultery.
Your men visit prostitutes,

sacrifice with cult prostitutes.
So a people without understanding come to ruin!
¹⁵ Though you commit adultery, Israel,
let not Judah become guilty.
Do not go to Gilgal,
do not go up to Beth-aven,
nor swear an oath, “As the LORD lives.”

¹⁶ Like a willful heifer,
Israel is stubborn.
Can the LORD now feed them
as he would a lamb in a broad pasture?
¹⁷ Ephraim is wedded to idols.
Leave them alone!
¹⁸ When their drinking is over
they sleep with the cult prostitutes,
their rulers love shameful ways.[†]
¹⁹ A windstorm will wrap them in its wings
and they will be ashamed of their sacrifices[‡].

5

The guilt of priests and princes

¹ Hear this, priests!
Attend, Israelites!
Listen, royal family!
For you is the judgment:
a snare you have become at Mizpeh,
and a net spread out on Tabor,
² the rebels are deep in slaughter,
but I will discipline all.
³ I know Ephraim,

[†] 4:18 Heb. uncertain. [‡] 4:19 LXX: altars.

Israel is not hidden from me,
for you, Ephraim, have committed prostitution
and Israel is defiled.

⁴ Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
For the spirit of prostitution is within them,
they do not know the LORD.

⁵ Israel's arrogance testifies against them,
Israel, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin,
and Judah also stumbles with them.

⁶ With their sheep and their cattle
they will go to seek the LORD
but they will not find him,
he has withdrawn from them,

⁷ for they have been untrue to the LORD,
their children are strangers.
Their new moon festivals will soon destroy them
and their fields.

⁸ Blow the trumpet in Gibeah,
the clarion in Ramah!
Raise the alarm in Beth-aven:
we are with you, Benjamin!*

⁹ Ephraim will become a desolation
in the day of punishment,
concerning the tribes of Israel
I make known what is certain.

¹⁰ The princes of Israel have become
like thieves who move boundary stones.
On them I will pour out my wrath like a flood.

¹¹ Ephraim will be oppressed, crushed by judgment,

* **5:8 LXX:** make Benjamin tremble

for they are determined to go after vanity†.

¹² So I am like a moth to Ephraim,
like rottenness to the house of Judah.

¹³ For when Ephraim saw their sickness
and Israel their wound,
Ephraim turned to Assyria,
to its patron king.
But he cannot heal you
nor relieve you of your wound.

¹⁴ For I myself will be like a lion to Ephraim,
like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, yes I, will rend and go my way,
I will carry off and none will rescue.

The lack of repentance and reform

¹⁵ I will return to my place,
until in remorse they seek my presence.
When they are in distress they will quickly seek
me,

6

¹ saying, “Come let us return to the LORD,
for he has torn us
but he will heal us,
he has injured us

but he will bandage our wounds,
² he will revive in a couple of days,
on the third day he will raise us up again,
to live in his presence.

³ Let us know, let us eagerly seek to know the LORD.
His coming is as sure as the sunrise.
He will come to us like the winter rain,

† **5:11** So LXX. Heb. uncertain.

as the spring rain that waters the earth.”

⁴ What can I make of you, Ephraim!

What can I make of you, Judah!

Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew which early goes away.

⁵ That is why I have hewn them by the prophets,
I have slain them by the words of my mouth.

My judgment is like the light that goes forth,

⁶ for it is love that I delight in and not sacrifice,
and knowledge of God and not burnt offerings.

⁷ But they after the manner of men have trans-
gressed the covenant,
there they have played me false.

⁸ Gilead is a city of evildoers,
tracked with bloody footprints,

⁹ and as bandits lie in wait for a man,
so a band of priests murder on the way to
Shechem.

How terrible is the evil they do!

¹⁰ In Bethel I have seen a horrible thing.

There Ephraim plays the prostitute,
Israel is defiled.

¹¹ Judah for you also a harvest is set.

When I would restore the fortunes of my people,

7

¹ when I would heal Israel,
then Ephraim's guilt is revealed,
and Samaria's crimes are seen,
how they practise fraud
and the thief enters in,

while outside bandits plunder.

² But it never crosses their minds
that I remember their wickedness.
Now their misdeeds surround them,
they are always before my face.

³ Their wickedness amuses the king,
and their lying gladdens the princes,

⁴ since they are all of them adulterers.
Their desire to do evil
burns like an oven heated by the baker,
so hot that he need not stir the fire,
from the kneading of the dough, until it rises.

⁵ On our king's festival day,
the princes are flushed with fever from wine.
He stretched forth his hand with the contemptu-
ous*,

⁶ for like an oven their heart burns with treachery,
all night their anger smolders,
in the morning it blazes into a flame of fire.

⁷ All of them glow like an oven,
they devour their rulers.
All their kings have fallen.
There is none among them who calls to me.

Evidence of the nation's iniquity

⁸ Ephraim – he lets himself be mixed among the
peoples,

Ephraim – he has become a cake unturned.

⁹ Strangers have devoured his strength, but he
does not know it.
His hair is sprinkled with grey, but he does not
notice.

* ^{7:5} Heb. uncertain

¹⁰ Israel's arrogance testifies against them
yet they do not return to the LORD their God,
and in all this they do not seek him.

¹¹ Ephraim is like a simple, silly dove:
to Egypt they call, after Assyria they go,
¹² wherever they turn I will spread my net over
them,
like birds of the sky I will bring them down,
I will catch them when I hear them gathering.
¹³ Woe to them, for they have strayed from me!
Destruction to them, for they have been untrue to
me.

Although it was I who redeemed them,
they speak lies about me.

¹⁴ They have never cried to me with their hearts,
but they are always wailing on their beds.
They gather to beg for corn and new wine,
but they turn away from me.

¹⁵ Although it was I who trained and strengthened
their arms,
concerning me they plan only evil.

¹⁶ They turn away from the Most High†.
They have become like a bow that swerves.
Their princes will fall by the sword,
because of the insolence of their tongues.
The land of Egypt will mock them.

8

¹ Put the horn to your mouth!

† **7:16** Heb. uncertain.

An eagle swoops down upon the house of the

LORD*

because they have transgressed my covenant,
trespassed against my law.

² To me they continually cry,

“My God, we Israel, we know you!”

³ But Israel has spurned that which is good,
so let the foe pursue him.

The Lord's rejection of Israel's rulers and idols

⁴ They themselves have made kings

but without my consent.

They have made princes

but without my knowledge.

Out of their silver and gold,

they have made idols to their destruction!

⁵ Your calf idol, O Samaria, is distasteful.

My anger is kindled against them.

How long will they escape punishment?

⁶ Israel made the thing:

a workman made it.

It is not a god!

Samaria's calf will become mere splinters.

⁷ They sow the wind and will reap the whirlwind.

A shoot which has no stalk, yields no fruit

If it should yield, strangers would devour it.

⁸ Israel is devoured.

Already it lies discarded among the nations

like a worthless pot.

⁹ For by themselves they have gone up to Assyria

like a wild donkey which wanders by itself.

* **8:1** Heb. uncertain

Ephraim pays for love

¹⁰ but even if they sell themselves among the nations,

I will round them up.

Soon the kings and princes will writhe under the burden of tribute!

¹¹ For as many altars as Ephraim has erected, they are to him altars for sinning,

¹² were I to write for him ever so many instructions,

they would be regarded as from a stranger.

¹³ The people love sacrifice, and so they offer sacrifices,

meat, and so they eat it,

although the LORD is not pleased with them,

so now he will remember their guilt,

and punish their sins.

Back to Egypt with them!

¹⁴ For Israel forgot his Maker and built palaces, and Judah multiplied fortified cities.

But I will send fire upon her cities,

and it will devour her strongholds.

9

The horrors of the coming exile

¹ Rejoice not too loudly, Israel,

like the nations,

for you have committed adultery,

being untrue to your God.

You have loved a prostitute's wages

on every threshing floor.

² Threshing floor and wine vat won't feed them,

the new wine will fail them.

³ They will not stay in the LORD's land,
but Ephraim will return to Egypt,
and in Assyria they will eat what is unclean.

⁴ They will not pour out libations of wine to the
LORD,
nor please him with their sacrifices.
Their bread will be like the bread of mourners:
all who eat it will defile themselves.
For their bread will be only for their hunger,
it will not come into the LORD's temple.

⁵ What will you do on the day of the festival?
Or on the day of the LORD's feast?

⁶ Even if they flee from destruction,
Egypt will gather them,
Memphis will bury them.
Nettles will take possession of their treasure of
silver,
thorns will push into their tents.

⁷ The days of punishment are come,
the days of recompense are at hand,
as soon the Israelites will know!
"The prophet is a fool,
the inspired man is raving mad!"
It is because of the greatness of your iniquity
and the greatness of your hatred.

⁸ Ephraim acts the spy with my God,
a prophet finds the snares of a fowler are in all his
ways.

In the house of his God they lay hostile plots,

⁹ they commit crimes as in the days of Gibeah,

God will remember their iniquity.
He will punish their sin.

Israel's corruption

¹⁰ I found Israel
like finding grapes in the wilderness.
I saw your ancestors
like they were the first fruit on a fig tree,
but as soon as they came to Baal-peor,
they consecrated themselves to shamefulness,
and became as abominable as the object of their
love.

¹¹ Ephraim – like a bird his glory flies away.
There will be no more birth,
no more motherhood,
no more conception.

¹² Even though they bring up their children,
I will bereave them until not one is left.
Woe to them when I turn away from them!

¹³ Ephraim – planted like Tyre in a meadow*,
But Ephraim too must lead forth their children to
slaughter.

¹⁴ Give them, LORD – what will you give?
Give them a miscarrying womb and shrivelled up
breasts!

¹⁵ All their evil began in Gilgal,
there I learned to hate them.
Because of the evil of their deeds
I will drive them out of my house.
I will no longer love them,

* **9:13** Heb. uncertain. LXX: as I have seen, his sons are destined
to be a prey

for all their princes are rebels.

¹⁶ Ephraim is blighted,
their root withered.

If they do bear children,
I will slay the darlings of their womb,

¹⁷ My God will reject them
because they have not listened to him,
and they will become wanderers among the na-
tions.

10

¹ A luxuriant vine is Israel.
He bore fruit lavishly.

In proportion to the increase of his fruit
he increased altars to idols.
In proportion to the beauty of his land
he made beautiful the sacred pillars.

² Their heart is false,
now they must be punished.
God himself will break the necks of their altars,
he will destroy their sacred pillars.

³ Yes, soon they will be saying,
“We have no king,
for we have not revered the LORD,
and a king, what could he do for us anyway?”

⁴ Speaking words, perjuring themselves, making
agreements,
and litigation springs up like a poisonous weed in
a plowed field.

⁵ The inhabitants of Samaria will tremble with
fear

for their calf of Beth-aven.
Its people will mourn over it,
and so will its priests,
who had rejoiced for its glory,
now departed from it.

⁶ It will be carried off to Assyria
as a present to the patron king.
Disgrace will Ephraim bear
and Israel will be ashamed of its idol.

⁷ As for Samaria, her king will disappear,
like foam on the face of the waters.

⁸ And the high places of Aven will be destroyed,
the shrines of Israel's sin,
thorns and thistles will grow on their altars,
and they will say to the mountains, "Cover us,"
and to the hills, "Fall upon us."

What a nation sows, it will reap

⁹ From the time of Gibeah, Israel has sinned.
There they took their stand.
Will not war overtake them in Gibeah
because of the wicked?

¹⁰ When I please, I will punish them.
Nations will gather against them
to chain them for their double crimes.

¹¹ Ephraim indeed was a trained heifer that loved
to thresh grain,
and I myself laid a yoke upon his fair neck*,
I made Ephraim draw and Judah must plow,
Jacob must turn the soil for himself.

* **10:11** Heb. uncertain.

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness,
reap the fruits of love.

Break up your fallow ground,
for it is time to seek the LORD,
so righteousness may come to you[†].

¹³ But you have plowed wickedness,
iniquity have you reaped.
You have eaten the fruit of lies.

Because you have trusted in your own path[‡],
in the multitude of your warriors,

¹⁴ the alarm of war will sound in your cities
and all your fortresses will be ruined,
as Shalman laid in ruins Beth-arbel in the day of
battle,
when mothers were dashed to pieces over their
children.

¹⁵ Thus will I do to you, Bethel,
because of the enormity of your wickedness.
When dawn breaks, so will the king of Israel be
broken.

11

The Lord's love for his faithless people

¹ When Israel was young, then I began to love him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.

² The more I called them,
the further they went away from me.
They kept sacrificing to Baals
and making offerings to idols.

³ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,

[†] 10:12 Heb. uncertain [‡] 10:13 LXX: chariots

taking them up in my arms,
but they did not know that I healed them.

⁴ With humane cords I ever drew them,
with bands of love.

I was to them as one who lifts up the yoke from off
their jaws,
and bending toward them, I gave them food to eat.

⁵ No! They return to the land of Egypt,
Assyria will be their king,
for they have refused to return to me.

⁶ Therefore the swords will whirl in their cities,
will devour in their fortresses*.

⁷ For my people are bent in rebellion against me,
even if they call on the Most High he will not raise
them†.

⁸ How can I give you up, Ephraim!
Give you over, Israel!
How am I to give you up as Admah!
Make you like Zeboim!
My heart asserts itself,
my sympathies are all aglow.

⁹ I will not carry into effect the fierceness of my
anger,
I will not turn to destroy Ephraim,
for God am I, and not man,
holy in the midst of you,
therefore I will not consume.

¹⁰ They will follow after the LORD.
Like a lion he will roar,

* ^{11:6} Heb. uncertain † ^{11:7} Heb. uncertain.

and when he roars
his children will come trembling from the west.
¹¹ They will come trembling like the birds from
Egypt,
like doves from the land of Assyria.
And I will bring them back to their houses,
– declares the LORD.

Israel's faithlessness from the first

¹² Ephraim has encompassed me with falsehood,
and the house of Israel with deceit.
But Judah still wanders with God
faithful to the Holy One[†].

12

¹ Ephraim herds the wind and hunts the sirocco.
All day long they heap up falsehood and fraud,
make a treaty with Assyria,
and sends tribute of olive oil to Egypt.
² The LORD has a charge to bring against Israel,
to punish Jacob for his acts,
according to his deeds will he requite him,
³ In the womb he supplanted his brother,
in manhood he wrestled with God,
⁴ He wrestled with the angel and prevailed,
he wept and sought his blessing.
At Bethel the LORD found him,
and there he spoke with us.
⁵ And the LORD is the God of hosts,
the LORD is his name!
⁶ So now, by the help of your God, return.
Keep true love and justice.

[†] **11:12** Heb. uncertain. Or “Judah is still restless against God”

Trust in your God without ceasing.

⁷ A merchant uses false scales:
They love to defraud.

⁸ Ephraim says, “Yes, I have become rich,
I have secured wealth for myself.
But despite my gains
no one will find a crime I can be convicted of!”

⁹ I am the LORD your God,
ever since the land of Egypt.
I will make you again dwell in tents,
as in days of old.

¹⁰ I spoke continually by the prophets.
It was I who multiplied visions,
and spoke in parables through the prophets.

¹¹ In Gilead is iniquity,
they will come to nothing.
In Gilgal they sacrifice bulls,
so their altars will be as stone heaps,
among the furrows of the field.

¹² And Jacob fled to the territory of Aram,
and Israel worked to earn a wife:
for a wife he herded sheep.

¹³ The LORD brought Israel up from Egypt by a
prophet,
and by a prophet Israel was guarded.

¹⁴ Ephraim has given bitter provocation.
His Lord will leave upon him his guilt of blood-
shed,
and for his contempt he will repay him.

13

The Lord's final destruction of the guilty nation

¹ When Ephraim used to speak there was trembling;

a prince was he in Israel.

But he incurred guilt through Baal and died.

² And now they go on sinning.

They make for themselves molten gods –

idols of silver, skillfully made,

wholly the work of smiths.

Yet to such they sacrifice!

And they who sacrifice kiss calf idols*!

³ Therefore they shall be like the morning mist,

like the dew that early disappears,

like the chaff which blows away from the threshing floor,

like the smoke from the window.

⁴ Yet it was I, the LORD your God,

ever since the land of Egypt,

you know no other god but me,

nor has there been any savior except me.

⁵ It was I who shepherded you in the wilderness,

in the land of burning heat.

⁶ When they were pastured

they became full,

when they were full

their hearts became proud.

Therefore they forgot me!

* **13:2** Heb. uncertain

⁷ So now I will be to them like a lion,
like a leopard will I lay in wait by the path.

⁸ I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her
cubs,

I will tear open their chests,
like a lion will devour them,
and like a wild beast will tear them in pieces.

⁹ You are destroyed, Israel,
by me, your only helper.

¹⁰ I want to rule you!

Where are your princes in your cities,
those of whom you demanded,
“Give me kings and princes.”

¹¹ I give you kings in my anger,
and take them away in my wrath.

¹² Ephraim’s iniquity is gathered up,
his sin is laid by in store.

¹³ The pangs of childbirth come upon him,
but he is an unwise child.
For this is no time to refuse to leave the womb!

¹⁴ Should I deliver them from the power of Sheol?
Should I redeem them from death?
Death, where are your plagues?
Sheol, where is your pestilence?
Compassion is forever hidden from my eyes.

¹⁵ Though he is flourishing among his brothers[†],
there will come an east wind,
the LORD’s wind,
coming up from the wilderness.

[†] **13:15** Or: in the midst of the reeds

His fountain will dry up,
his spring shall be parched.
The wind will strip the treasury,
all the precious things.

¹⁶ Samaria will bear her guilt,
for she has rebelled against her God.
They will fall by the sword,
their children dashed to pieces,
their pregnant women ripped open.

14

Words of exhortation and promise

¹ Return, Israel, to the LORD your God,
for you have stumbled in your iniquity.

² Take words of repentance with you,
and return to the LORD your God.

Say to him:
Wholly pardon our iniquity,
accept that which is good,
instead of sacrificing bulls,
we offer our praise.

³ Assyria will not save us,
nor Egyptian warhorses,
and we will no more call
the work of our hands our gods.
For in you orphan Israel finds mercy.

⁴ "I will heal their apostasy,
I will love them freely,
now that my anger is turned away from them,

⁵ I will be as dew to Israel.

He will blossom like the lily,
he will plant his roots like the cedars of Lebanon,
⁶ his saplings will spread out,
his beauty will be like that of the olive tree,
his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon.

⁷ People will return and dwell in my shade,
they will bring life to new grain.
They shall sprout like the vine,
and their renown will be like that of the wine of
Lebanon.

⁸ Ephraim – what have I to do with idols!
It is I the LORD who respond to him and look after
him.
I am like an evergreen cypress,
from me is your fruit found.

⁹ Whoever is wise,
let him discern these things,
prudent, let him perceive them;
For the LORD's ways are straight,
and the righteous walk in them,
but the wicked stumble in them.

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