

Chapter Seven

As noted at the conclusion of the last chapter, the opening verse of this new one forms one continuous sentence. It reads literally “as I heal to Israel,” the verb being *rapha*’ (cf. 6.1). In other words, certainly the Lord wishes to bring about restoration for Israel but is hindered by Ephraim’s corruption which has come to light. The verb is *galah* and the noun, *havon* (cf. 2.10 and 5.5 respectively). In addition to Israel/Ephraim being mentioned as one, we have Samaria which is another name for the northern kingdom. Her wicked deeds too are revealed, *rah* literally here as the noun “wickedness.” It is found in the next two verses.

Vs. 1 continues by saying that all three (essentially one)–Ephraim, Israel and Samaria–are in the habit of dealing falsely, the verb *pahal* (cf. 6.8) and the noun *sheqer* which is a noun connoting to act in a deceptive manner. “Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue” [Ps 120.2]. They do this out of sight as a thief and bandit: the former break in while the latter from without. *Ganav* is the former and *gedod* is the latter: “In at the windows like a thief” [Jl 2.9] and 6.9 and which is in the plural.

Vs. 2 begins with the conjunctive *v-* (not as common in the Book of Hosea, by the way) translated as “but.” It serves to introduce the embarrassing fact that Ephraim-Israel-Samaria is failing to consider or literally with a certain flair of the dramatic “say in their hearts,” the verb ‘*amar* and the noun *lev* (cf. 1.1 and 4.11 respectively). Deep with their hearts they fail to recognize that the Lord indeed remembers their evil deeds, *zakar* (cf. 2.17 but not noted there) also as to bring to account. Such wishing for the Lord not to remember is exactly that.

In the second sentence in vs. 2 the Lord says that Ephraim-Israel-Samaria are basically caught in their own doings. Their deeds or *mahalal* (cf. 5.4; compare with *pahal* and *hasah* as noted in 6.8) have literally encompassed them like a trap, *savav* also as to surround. “Ephraim has encompassed me with lies and the house of Israel with deceit” [11.12]. This entrapment has served to put them smack before (*neged*, also in the presence of) the Lord’s face.

If as vs. 3 says, Ephraim-Israel-Samaria gladden the king and princes by their combined treachery, automatically this evil or *rah* (cf. vs. 1) transfers to the people and thus infects the entire nation. *Samach* is the verb, also to be joyful but here obviously taken in the negative sense by association with *rah*. “Rejoice not, O Israel”

[9.1]! As for the princes, it's treachery or *kachash* which involves lying. "For the cursing and lies which they utter, consume them in wrath" [Ps 59.12].

Vs. 4 lumps the three together as adulterers, the participle *na'aph* being used as in 3.1 which is a more specified *rah* as noted in the previous verse. Such adultery is likened to an oven used for baking bread which means it has a long, slow effect.

Vs. 5 mentions "the day of our king" which can refer to a coronation. Reference to wine can refer to, as a footnote in the NIV suggests, the relatively obscure King Elah who had died in drunkenness who reigned two years (cf. 1Kg 16.9). While drunk, he associated with mockers.

Vs. 6 has the second mention of an oven or *tanur* (cf. vs. 4 but not noted there) also as a furnace and goes into some detail about what goes on within it. That is to say, the "heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 2) of them draw near" as it's put literally, the verb being *qarav* which here may be taken as increasing in heat, intrigue being that which fires them up, 'arav also as to lay in ambush. References: "I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off" [Is 46.13]. "An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips" [Prov 12.6].

During the night when the heat is turned down, anger smolders but in the morning when it's turned up again, at once it blazes forth. Vs. 7 continues this theme, that is, despite the intense heat that had been building all night and suddenly bursts forth like the sun, no one calls upon the Lord, literally as well as graphically "there is not calling in them to me," the verb being *qara'* and first found in 1.4. Such final words of this verse have a definite poignancy difficult to imagine in light of the complete blindness of the people and their leaders.

In vss. 8 and 9 Ephraim is mentioned twice, mixing with the peoples as well as being a cake which hadn't turned, *balal* and *haphak*. The former image is dynamic in the negative sense of confounding whereas the latter is static, indicative of the utter confusion at hand. References: "And I will confound their language" [Gn 11.7]. "My heart recoils within me" [11.8]. In vs. 9 the participle *zur* (cf. 5.7) for aliens is used compared with the more generic *ham* for peoples in vs. 8. Also Ephraim is ignorant...lacks *yadah* (cf. 6.3)...in two ways: not being aware that he's being devoured and suddenly having grey hairs.

In vs. 10 Israel is mentioned, more specifically, his pride or *ge'on* (cf. 5.5) or literally “in his face” which prevents a return (*shuv*, cf. 6.11) to the Lord as well as seeking him, *baqash* (cf. 5.15).

In vs. 11 Ephraim is likened to a dove or *yonah* which here is symbolic of a lack of decisiveness [11.11], literally having no heart or *lev* (cf vs. 6). I.e., Ephraim flits back and forth between two rivals, Egypt to the south and Assyria to the north with both taking full advantage of this confusion. Amid this constant back and forth which the Lord decides to put a stop, Ephraim ends up trapped as a bird in a net.

In vs. 12 the Lord intends to chastize (*yasar*) the people for their wicked deeds which runs in Hebrew literally as “according to the report to their congregation.” As for *yasar*, it implies communication of knowledge in order to shape specific conduct and is found next in vs. 15

In vs. 13 the Lord gives loud, spontaneous lament to his unfaithful people, ‘oy or “woe.” “Woe to them when I depart from them” [9.12]! Their actions thus far may be summed up by the verb *nadad* (to stray) which suggests restless and being tinged with panic. “They shall be wanderers among the nations” [9.17]. Without missing a beat the Lord comes close to flinging out a curse, that is, wishing them destruction, *shad* also as robbery and spoil. “Even if they escape from destruction” [9.6]. Note that this is the NIV translation whereas the RSV has “For behold, they are going to Assyria.” Equivalent to this straying is rebellion, the verb *pashah* also connoting transgression which is emphasized by the preposition *b-*, “in me.” “Because they have broken my covenant and transgressed my law” [8.1].

Continuing his ‘oy, if you will, the Lord says that he’s willing to redeem or deliver the people, *padah*. “Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death” [13.14]? However, he anticipates the response, namely, that the people speak lies literally “upon (*hal-*) me,” the verb being *kazav*. “They multiply falsehood and violence” [12.1].

Vs. 14 continues with the intent of the people paying attention...some perhaps but certainly not everyone cries out to him literally in (*b-*) their hearts, *zahaq* and *lev* (cf. vs. 12), the verb also to call out, to exclaim. “To me they cry, My God, we Israel know you” [8.2]. Instead of this *zahaq*, the people prefer wailing upon their beds, gashing themselves and engaging in outright rebellion. You could say that they are doing this to get the Lord’s attention. It works, to be sure, but not according to what they expect.

Vs. 15 is similar to what is described in the previous verse in that the people are devising evil against the Lord, *chavash* and *rah* (cf. 6.1 and vs. 3 respectively). This they do despite the Lord having trained and strengthened their arms, presumably for battle, *yasar* (cf. vs. 15) and *chazaq*. The latter also means to harden. “For he strengthens the bars of your gates” [Ps 147.13].

Vs. 16 brings to conclusion this contrast between divine concern and human rejection of it with yet another condemnation, this time with regard to princes. According to the **RSV**, the text here is uncertain but reads “They turn to Baal” whereas it reads literally “they return (*shuv*, cf. vs. 10) not to upon” or *hal*, the preposition meaning above. The **NIV** seems to back this up with “They do not turn to the Most High.” In other words, the insolence which the people have spoken will result in them being derided not in their own land but in Egypt. *Zaham* connotes rage whereas *lahag* is similar though connotes scorn. “There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation” [Ps 38.3]. “You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those about us” [Ps 44.13].

1) rapha', galah, havon, rah, pahal, sheqer, ganav, gedod, 2) 'amar, lev, mahalal, savav, neged, 3) rah, samach, kachash, 4) na'aph, 6) tanur, lev, qarav, 'arav, 7) qara', 8) balal, haphak, 9) zur, yadah, 10) ge'on, shuv, baqash, 11) yonah, lev, 12) yasar, 13) 'oy, nadad, padah, shad, pashah, kazav, 14) zahaq, lev, 15) chavash, rah, yasar, chazaq, 16) shuv, zaham, lahag

Chapter Eight

This new chapter continues the Lord's relentless accusations against his people which, despite their harshness, is a sign of his deep love or *chesed* for them. He starts off with a bang, this time an impending invasion by a yet unidentified nation called a vulture or *nesher*, this bird preferring to eat the corpses of those who have been slain. I.e., they are not exactly predators but fond of coming on the scene after a tragedy and picking up the remnants. *Nesher* also applies to an eagle. “Your youth is renewed as the eagle's” [Ps 103.5]. Although the Lord is about to launch into more condemnations regarding Israel, a true sign of his *chesed* is that he asked the people to sound an alarm about this invasion, *shophar* (cf. 5.8) being the chief means to do it, that is, a trumpet. As for this vulture ready to land, it's hovering over the Lord's house or temple (i.e., upon or *hal*- the *beyth*, cf. 6.10). Apparently the people were unaware of it until this point.

The reason for this vulture about to devour Israel is obvious from what had been recounted thus far. That is, the people—rather “my people” (personal pronoun brings it home all the more)—have broken the Lord’s covenant and have transgressed his law (*beryth* and *Torah*, cf. 6.7 and 4.6 respectively) the first person singular pronoun again being used. The two verbs with similar meaning are *havar* and *pashah* (cf. 6.7 and 7.13 respectively). The vulture knew this from afar which is why it has come.

In vs. 2 the people have been alerted and see the vulture overhead which makes them cry out to the Lord, *zahaq* (cf. 7.14). They claim, albeit falsely but in extreme desperation, that they know the Lord, *yadah* (cf. 7.9). Note the present tense of the verb, which can indicate that the people have a vibrant relationship with the Lord which is far from the truth.

Because Israel lacks such *yadah* in the present, in vs. 3 the Lord says that the people have spurned the good (*tov*, cf. 3.5), *zanach* also as to cast off and occurring a second time in vs. 5. And so this *zanach* results in the enemy—the vulture Assyria—pursuing Israel, *radaph* (cf. 6.3).

Starting in vs. 4 and for the next several verses the Lord explains why this tragedy of an invasion has come about. They made kings instead of having the Lord as their king; the same applies to princes without him knowing it, *yadah* (cf. vs. 2). Actually this hearkens back to when the people demanded a king instead of the Lord: “For they have not rejected you (Samuel), but they have rejected me from being king over them” [1Sam 8.7]. Then they proceed to make idols, *hatsav* (cf. 4.17 but not noted there) which is derived from the verbal root of the same form meaning to form, to fashion. The result is their own destruction, *karath* (cf. 2.18) suggesting that they are cut down.

Another instance of this idol-fashioning is in vs. 5, the calf of Samaria, which the Lord has spurned, *zanach* (cf. vs. 3) coupled with his anger burning (*charah*) against them. “Then the earth reeled and rocked...because he was angry” [Ps 18.7]. This is reminiscent of what Aaron had done when Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, (*hegel* in both instances): “And he received the gold at their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a molten calf” [Ex 32.4].

Now the Lord puts forth a rhetorical question which spills over into vs. 6, used that is, asking how long will it take before Israel is pure, the noun *niqayon* having four other biblical references, one of which is Ps 26.6: “I wash my hands in innocence and

go about your altar, O Lord.” As for the calf, it was fashioned by human hands, *charash* being a noun. “Idols skillfully made of their silver, all of them the work of craftsmen” 13.2]. The Hebrew text says literally that “backslidings he shall become the calf of Samaria,” *shevavym* being the only such noun in the Bible.

Sow and reap in vs. 7: to the former belongs the wind or *ruach* (cf. 5.4) and to the latter *suphah*. The latter is stronger and carries everything along with it: “So do you pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your hurricane” [Ps 83.15]! Implied in this verse is sowing a relatively insignificant wind—almost a breeze—where it stays in the hearts of those doing it after which it comes forth from them as a hurricane according to the psalm. Anything that has sprung up such as standing grain, aliens will devour. Such aliens also partake in this *suphah*, the participle *zur* being used as in 7.9. As for this devouring, the verb is *balah* (cf. vs. 8) which implies a swallowing whole and entire of what one is consuming.

Vs. 8 continues the theme of *balah* with regard to Israel, making it (‘they’ in the Hebrew) among the nations a vessel which is of no use, literally as “no delight in it,” the verb being *chaphets* (cf. 6.6). Compare *zur* or alien by birth with *goy* (cf. vs. 10) which refers to nations other than Israel.

In vs. 9 Israel is described as a wild ass having gone to Assyria while Ephraim has hired lovers (‘*ahav*, cf. 3.1). Even though this is true, in vs. 10 the Lord himself has decided to take action, that is, to gather them, *qavats* (cf. 1.11). It seems that as of this moment the people are unaware this will happen to them.

Vs. 11 speaks of the idolatrous worship by Ephraim who has multiplied altars for sinning which have taken on a life of their own, as though they themselves were sin itself. Even should the Lord write laws (*torah*, cf. vs. 1), the people wouldn’t recognize them except as strange, *zur* being used yet again as in vs. 7. As for the sacrifices offered upon these altars which are equated as sin itself, the Lord has no delight, *ratsah* also as to be pleased with. “Therefore the Lord does not accept them” [Jer 14.10]. Such a lack of *ratsah* will force the Lord to return his people to Egypt and punish them for their sins, the verb being *paqad* (cf. 4.14).

As expected, Chapter Eight comes to a close on a dour note. That is to say, because Israel has forgotten its Maker (the common verb *hasah*) and instead has constructed palaces while Judah is equally guilty by constructing fortified cities, the Lord will rain down fire upon them, this being reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah.

1) neshar, shophar, beyth, beryth, Torah, 2) zahaq, yadah, 3) zanach, tov, radaph, 4) yadah, hatsav, karath, 5) zanach, charah, niqayon, 6) charash, shevavym, 7) ruach, suphah, zur, balah, 8) balah, chaphets, goy, 'ahav, 10) qavats, 12) torah, zur, 13) ratsah, paqad, 14) hasah

Chapter Nine

And so the saga of Israel's rejection of the Lord continues for another chapter. This time he bids...commands...Israel neither to rejoice nor to exult which reads literally as "do not rejoice to exultation." The verb is *samach* (cf. 7.3) and the noun is *gyl*. The latter derives from a verbal root meaning to go in a circle, and with this in mind, could imply that such joy is expressed in such a manner. "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy" [Ps 43.4]. As for such *gyl*, the Lord specifies that Israel does not do it "like the peoples" which suggests worship of alien divinities. The reason for such a prohibition is that Israel has, as already depicted, acted as a harlot, *zanah* (cf. 5.3) being the equivalent of having forsaken the Lord, literally as "from upon (*hal*) God." Such behavior is expressed by Israel having hired herself out to do threshing which implies working for those who are worshiping alien divinities

Vs. 2 says that Israel will not be able to produce sufficient food with the result that in vs. 3 the people won't be able to remain in their own land (*'erets*, cf. 4.3). Instead, they will be forced (that is, Ephraim) to return to both Egypt to the south and Assyria to the north. In other words, they will undergo exile and become slaves to these two enemy nations.

Vs. 4 continues with this theme of exile, that is, Israel won't be able to pour libations of wine to the Lord nor will their sacrifices please him, *harav* connoting the giving of surety or the making of a pledge. "May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord" [Ps 104.34]. As for any bread they wish to offer to the Lord, it won't be able to come to his house, *beyth* (cf. 6.10) being another term for the temple in Jerusalem.

This situation provides an occasion for the Lord to put forth a rhetorical question in vs. 5, that is, what will Israel do when the time to observe her celebrations roll around, she being exiled in Egypt and Assyria? The two words to describe them are appointed festival and day of the feast of the Lord. Actually the first reads literally as "day of appointment," hence two mentions of day (*yom*, cf. 5.9), *mohed* and *chag*. The

former is a set time as well as assembly and the latter a festival usually associated with a sacrifice: cf. 2.11 for both but not noted there.

In vs. 6 the Lord speaks of their fate, destined literally “from destruction” or *shad* (cf. 7.13) and Memphis (in Egypt) which will bury them. Also their possessions and tents will become worthless, that is, nettles and thorns.

Vs. 7 has two mentions of “day” or *yom* whereas vs. 7 has it in the plural with regard to punishment and recompense, *pqkudah* and *shilom*. This plurality implies an extended period of time known only to the Lord. The former suggests visitation in the sense of reckoning whereas the latter, reward. “What will you do on the day of punishment” [Is 10.3]? *Shilom* has two other biblical references, Is 34.8 and Mic 7.3, the former being “For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.” With regard to these extended “days,” indeed Israel will recognize them when they arrive, *yadah* (cf. 8.4).

Vs. 7 mentions a prophet and man of the spirit (*ruach*, cf. 8.7) whom you’d expect to have the *yadah* just mentioned. However both do not, the former being a fool and the latter, mad: ‘*evyl* and the participle *shagah*. The former connotes an element of impiety and the latter something brought on by divine fury. References: “Fools despise wisdom and instruction” [Prov 1.7]. “The Lord has made you priest...over every madman who prophesies” [Jer 29.26]. Both extreme disorders are the result of Israel’s iniquity and hatred, *havon* (cf. 7.1); as for *mastemah*, the only other biblical reference is in vs. 8. Note that the adjective *rav* as “great” applies to both, also as numerous which can correspond to the multiply mention of days.

Vs. 8 speaks of a prophet who isn’t mentioned but can infer Hosea himself compared with the one who is a fool in the previous verse. He is a watchman or the participle *tsaphah* also as to watch over or pay attention to. “Harken, your watchmen lift up their voice, together they sing for joy” [Is 52.8]. Despite his vigilance, he has a multitude of snares (*pach*, cf. 5.1 but not noted there) in the way. Not only this, he must contend with his own people who persist in hating God within his very *beyth* (cf. vs. 4) or temple, this being the second and only other occurrence of *mastemah* (cf. vs. 7).

The self-inflicted corruption in vs. 9 reads literally as “they make deep they corrupt,” the two verbs being *hamaq* (cf. 5.2) and *shachat*, the latter also as to ruin. “I will destroy you, O Israel; who can help you” [13.9]? Reference to “themselves” is lacking in the Hebrew text. Such *hamaq* and *shachat* is reminiscent of the days of Gibeah, a

footnote in the **NIV** referring to the appalling behavior of the Benjaminites in the Book of Judges, chapters 19-21. Just as the Lord does not forget that iniquity (*havon*, cf. vs. 7), so he won't forget that of the current generation. That is, he will punish them for their sins, *paqad* being the verb (cf. 8.13).

In vs. 10 the Lord likens finding Israel to the following two examples: grapes in the wilderness or *midbar* and first fruit on a fig tree. Reference is to that nation's fathers. Compare with the *midbar* in 2.14: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness." Another reference more to the point is Dt 32.10: "He found him (Jacob) in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness."

Despite this appeal intended to win back Israel, typically the people reneged, the Lord citing the example of Baal-Peor as noted in Num 25.3: "So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." The Hebrew text in the verse at hand has the noun *bosh* (shame, cf. 4.19) instead of Baal though in the Lord's eyes the two were equivalent to each other. Such a preference for this alien divinity is put in terms of a misnomer, if you will, a consecration or the verb *nazar* which means to separate for a specific purpose, usually one related to the Lord. "Tell Aaron and his sons to keep away from the holy things of the people of Israel" [Lev 22.2].

As a result of this so-called consecration, the people became just as detestable as what they loved, *shiquts* and 'ahav (cf. 8.8). Note that the Hebrew text reads literally as "according (*k-*) to their loving" which unites the two words even further and brings home the apostasy in a forceful manner. The former refers to that which is abominable as related to foreign gods. This is echoed clearly in Is 66.3: "These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations."

In vs. 11 the Lord compares Ephraim's fleeting glory (*kavod*, cf. 4.7 but not noted there) to a bird as well as not being able to give birth and thus condemned to remain sterile. Should by chance Ephraim be able to beget children, the Lord will bereave them until not one is left, the verb being *shakal* also as to deprive, to destroy. "Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts" [vs. 14]. Once again the Lord shows himself as having been miffed by exclaiming 'oy (cf. 7.15) or "woe" as loud as he could so that without a doubt the people would hear it. Then he turns his back and leaves them hanging.

Now (vs. 13) the Lord turns attention to the sons of Ephraim which according to a footnote in the **RSV** is uncertain, that is, "destined for prey." However, it's closely

connected to what follows in the same verse, namely, that Ephraim himself...the entire nation...will lead his sons to slaughter, the participle *harag* which applies to both enemies and personal rivals. “So the sword...is sharpened and polished to be given into the hand of the slayer” [Ezk 21.11]. To this in vs. 14 Hosea (most likely) cheers on the Lord, that they deserve what they are getting.

In vs. 15 the Lord refers to Gilgal (cf. 4.15), the source of every evil or *rah* (cf. 7.15) and where he hated the people (‘began to’ is lacking in the Hebrew text). A variation of *rah* is used in this same verse, *roah* in reference to their deeds or *mahalal* (cf. 7.2). “Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds” [Ps 28.4]. The consequence? The Lord will drive them from his house (*beyth*, cf. vs. 8) or temple. Once the door to that temple is shut, if you will, the Lord will love (‘*ahav*, cf. vs. 10) them no more.

In the last two verse of this chapter the Lord sums up what has happened thus far, namely, that Ephraim is stricken (*nakah*, cf. 6.1) and made sterile. Even should the people manage to bear children, the Lord is standing by to slay them. Finally (vs. 17) the Lord will cast them off, *ma’as* (cf. 4.6) also as to despite utterly for failing to hearken (*shamah*, cf. 5.9) to him. Their ultimate fate is to wander the earth not unlike Cain after having slain his brother Abel (cf. Gn 4.12). The verb is *nadad* (cf. 7.13) along with *goy* (cf. 8.8) which refers to all nations apart from Israel, the preposition *b-* being used, “in the nations.” And so Chapter Nine closes on this note of exile.

1) *samach*, *gyl*, *zanah*, 3) ‘*erets*, 4) *harav*, *beyth*, 5) *mohed*, *chag*, 6) *shad*, 7) *pqkudah*, *shilom*, *yadah*, *ruach*, ‘*evyl*, *shagah*, *rav*, *havon*, *mastemah*, 8) *tsaphah*, *pach*, *beyth*, 9) *hamaq*, *shachat*, *havon*, *paqad*, 10) *midbar*, *bosh*, *shiquts*, ‘*ahav*, 11) *kavod*, 12) *shakal*, ‘*oy*, 13) *harag*, 15) *rah*, *roah*, *mahalal*, *beyth*, ‘*ahav*, 16) *nakah*, 17) *ma’as*, *shamah*, 18) *nada*, *goy*

Chapter Ten

Although this is a new chapter, unfortunately the theme is the same, the increase of Israel’s self-inflicted wounds. It starts off with calling the nation a vine or *gephen* found in 2.12 but not noted there. Actually *gephen* is another name for Israel as in Ps 80.8: “You brought a vine out of Egypt.” In the verse at hand, Israel-as-vine is

luxuriant or the participle *baqaq* which literally means to pour out or to empty and thus to spread. “The Lord makes the earth empty” [Is 24.1].

As for this *baqaq*, indeed it yields fruit, *shavah*. The more it spreads out, the more its fruit increased, this verb fundamentally as to be equal or equivalent as well as to make level, to set. “Splendor and majesty you bestow upon him” [Ps 21.5]. Unfortunately *baqaq/shavah* has a negative consequence: the more the fruit, the more the altars as well as pillars, *matsevah* (cf. 3.4 but not noted there) also as a statue. Also note the connection between the adjective *rav* (cf. 9.7) and the verb *ravah*, “more” and to increase. For the latter, cf. 8.14 but not noted there. The out of control increase is bound up with Israel’s prosperity, for the more it had (the adjective *tov* or good, cf. 8.3), the more pillars the people made, *yata^v*¹. All in all, the more Israel strove against the Lord, the more these strivings work against her.

Vs. 2 expands what the previous verse puts forth, namely, that the singular heart (*lev*, cf. 7.14) of the plural nation is false, *chalaq* being a verb which means to divide and has a mostly negative connotation. “Their words were smoother than butter” [Ps 55.21]. Such a collective division made worse by reason of being in the heart compels Israel to bear its guilt, *asham* (cf. 5.15). Regardless, the Lord himself will destroy these altars and pillars, *shadad* as in vs. 14: “and all your fortresses shall be destroyed.”

In vs. 3 Israel has the gall to say that at least for now (*hatah*) they have no king nor fear the Lord, the common verb *yare’*. As for a king, they ask what he could do for them. A footnote in the NIV says of this “Such would soon be their condition when Assyria destroyed the nation.” Vs. 4 says of this empty boast that they are simply empty words, literally “they *davar davar* vain,” the noun for “vain” being *shave’* also as falsehood or lie. “If there is iniquity in Gilead, they shall surely come to nought” [12.11]. Similar to this *davar/shave’* are judgments in the sense of lawsuits which reads literally as “cut a covenant,” *karath* and *beryth* (cf. 8.4 and 8.1 respectively). In sum, they spring up like weeds unable to be eradicated.

As for those living in Samaria, vs. 5 says that all tremble for the calf (plural in Hebrew) Beth-aven, the verb being *gur* (cf. 7.14 but not noted there) fundamentally as to be a sojourner or living in a land which is alien to one’s own. This notion fits in well with what’s going on here, for the calf’s supposed glory (*kavod*) has departed, *galah* (cf. 9.11 and 7.1 respectively) being the verb.

¹The verbal root isn’t listed in the Hebrew concordance used here, so any other reference is omitted.

In vs. 6 the **RSV** calls the calf unceremoniously “this thing” (literally, ‘it’) which concurs with the Lord’s view, for it will be carried off as booty to the king of Assyria, this presupposing an invasion and exile. Such is the fate of Ephraim and Israel, the former being put to shame and the latter being ashamed over the idol which in Hebrew is “counsel,” the verbal root being *yahats*. Actually this fits in because the people had sought counsel in their false gods responsible for their current dilemma from which they cannot extract themselves.

Both vss. 7 and 8 continue the depressing theme at hand, namely, that the king of Samaria will perish, the high places of Aven and the sin of Israel shall be destroyed with thorns, etc., growing upon their deserted altars. Once this happens, the people will beg that the mountains and hills fall upon them in order to conceal them. These words are echoed clearly in Rev 6.16: “calling to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand before it.’”

In vs. 9 the Lord speaks of the days of Gibeah (cf. 9.9) when Israel has not only sinned but persisted in it. This will compel the Lord to come against his people, the Hebrew of vs. 10 reading literally “In my yearning” or *avath*. It has three other biblical references, one of which is Dt 18.6: “and he may come when he desires.” This desire impels the Lord to chastize his people, *asar* meaning to bind. “To bind their kings with chains” [Ps 149.8]. *Asar* is found a second time in the verse as “chastised” with regard to iniquity or *havon* (cf. 9.9). As for the first *asar*, it takes the form of bringing nations against them, the verb *asaph* (cf. 4.3 but not noted there) as to gather, to collect.

Vs. 11 mentions Ephraim, Judah and Jacob, all three whom the Lord will put to work similar to plow animals after which he takes a positive tone. That is to say, he bids them to sow, reap and break the ground, the first two images pertaining to righteousness and steadfast love, *tsedaqah* (the only reference in Hosea) and *chesed* (cf. 6.6). The former reads literally as “to you to righteousness” (i.e., *l-*) and the latter as “to (*l-*) mouth of kindness.” The third as to breaking up fallow ground, signaling a time to seek the Lord, *eth* being equivalent to *kairos* as *yom* is in 5.9, that is “day.” As for *eth*, cf. 13.13: “for now he does not present himself at the mouth of the womb.” The verb *darash* implies treading or rubbing up against and as used here implies repentance. “In the seventh year...certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord and sat before me” [Ezk 20.1].

Continuing the theme of land, the Lord now says that he will rain salvation upon (l-) his people, *tsedeq* being more along the lines of righteousness (cf. 2.19).

The showing of mercy by the Lord in vs. 11 is a kind of interlude before resuming an account of Israel's iniquity and injustice mentioned in vs. 12, *reshah* and *havlah*. "Lest the righteous put forth their hands to do wrong" [Ps 125.3]. "In company with men who work iniquity" [Ps 141.4].

Because Israel had put her trust in weapons of war, tumult will arise among her people, *sha'on* more as a rushing noise. "Who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples" [Ps 65.7]. And so Chapter Ten concludes with reference to an unknown event (perhaps better kept that way by reason of the extreme wickedness involved) that will be done literally to Bethel. Also her king will be cut off utterly, this expressed by double use of the verb *damah* (cf. 4.60).

1) *gephen*, *baqaq*, *shavah*, *matsevah*, *rav*, *ravah*, *tov*, *yatav*, 2) *lev*, *chalaq*, 'asham, *shadad*, 3) *yare'*, 4) *davar*, *shave'*, *karath*, *beryth*, 5) *gur*, *kavod*, *galah*, 6) *yahats*, 10) 'avath, 'asar, *havon*, 'asaph, 12) *tsedaqah*, *chesed*, 'eth, *darash*, *tsedeq*, 11) *reshah*, *havlah*, 15) *damah*

Chapter Eleven

A footnote in the NIV says that this chapter begins with a third appeal to Israel's history and therefore her collective memory, the other two being 9.10 and 10.9. The situation under consideration specifically traces that nation's roots to Egypt when it was a child or *nahar* meaning a new-born as well as a young man. "I cannot speak, for I am a child" [Jer 1.6]. Compare this *nahar* with "my son" in the same verse. As for the Lord loving Israel ('*ahav*, cf. 9.15) as a *nahar*, the people had been in Egypt for some four hundred years which means they had inhabited Canaan for some time before this. In other words, Egypt represents a new starting point for Israel from which the Lord called him, *qara'* (cf. 7.7). It's as though the previous occupation of Canaan hadn't existed which is treated almost as some new place to which the people will migrate. The Lord expressed his love for Israel through Moses who first received a *qara'* from the burning bush. "God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here am I'" [Ex 3.4]. So Moses' *qara'* passed on to that of Israel, the two being one and the same.

The first words of vs. 2 read literally “The more they called them” whereas the RSV has the first person singular referring to the Lord. The same applies to “went from me” which reads “from them.” Regardless, there’s a pull between two prepositions, *l-* and *min-* or “to them” and “from them” or to the people and from the Lord. Despite this persistent *qara’*—although Moses led Israel from Egypt—the long term challenge lay ahead in the Sinai wilderness when the people repeatedly neglected the *qara’*. I.e., it’s a playing out of the just mentioned *l-* vs. *min-*.

An indication of a failure to heed the divine *qara’* is Israel’s persistence in sacrificing to Baal and idols, an extreme example of the *min-* noted above. This, of course, refers to idolatry in the desert after Egypt. While in that country, there’s no record of Israel complying to Egyptian divinities although that must have taken place but not enough to corrupt them fully. Actually it’s absent from the record.

Vs. 3 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “yet,” this indicative of the Lord’s persistence in staying with Israel. It precisely he who taught Ephraim how to walk, the verb being *ragal* which also means to watch or to spy out. “And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies” [Jos 2.1]. The teaching to walk may be said to start with Israel passing through the Red Sea after which he took the people up into his arms, that is, from the water and placed them on dry ground. Although *ragal* can apply throughout Israel’s forty years of wandering when the people were in the Lord’s arms, they persisted in what they’ve been depicted of doing throughout the Book of Hosea. That is to say, they failed to know (*yadah*, cf. 9.7) that this was a kind of healing process, the verb *rapha’* (cf. 7.1). As for this healing, we can trace it to Israel in Egypt with the Passover.

In vs. 4 *rapha’* continues with leading Israel, the verb *mashak* being a take-off of *qara’* or calling in vs. 1, more a drawing-out (a verbal root similar to that with regard to Moses, cf. Ex 2.10). “And they drew and lifted up Joseph” [Gn 37.28]. In the verse at hand, such drawing is done as expected with cords or *chevel*, also as a measuring line and pang. “The pangs of childbirth come for him, but he is an unwise son” [13.13]. In the verse at hand, *chevel* is used with literally the singular “man” or ‘*adam*.

Similar to *chevel* in vs. 4 are bands or *havoth*, also as rope. “Let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their cords from us” [Ps 2.3]. In the verse at hand, such bands are of love, ‘*ahavah* (cf. 9.15 but not noted there).

Vs. 4 continues with the Lord recounting how he took the initiative of easing a yoke (*hol*, cf. vs. 7) put on their jaws not unlike the one in Dt 28.48: “and he will put a

yoke of iron upon your neck until he has destroyed you.” Not only this, but the Lord takes care to bend down and feed his people, this being somewhat reminiscent of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

After several verses of such a heart-felt appeal from the Lord, one can't help but wonder why the rejection by Israel. Once or even twice may be acceptable, but time after time? This theme continues to the end of the chapter with another demonstration of his *chesed*. By now or toward the end of the book the experience has been like being on a see-saw, back and forth between this *chesed* and Israel's refusal of it.

And so vs. 5 begins with the people returning to both Egypt and Assyria (cf. 8.13 and 9.3). As for Assyria, that land will be Israel's king instead of the Lord. This can be taken as an echo of their rejection (*ma'en*) of the Lord as king, this verb bound up with *shuv* (cf. 7.16) or return. It's used in two different contexts: to Egypt and to Assyria but not to the Lord. “They did not keep God's covenant but refused to walk according to his law” [Ps 78.10]. This *ma'en* can be traced all the way back in 1Sam 8.7, one of the most tragic verses in the Bible with long term consequences: “For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.” Indeed, this verse echos during all that time without diminishment and will continue to do so. Actually it points out Israel's fundamental problem as it's presented a countless number of times.

Vs. 6 speaks of the consequences of this refusal which is put in terms of the following three words where “ch” and “k” bring home the feel of total consumption all the more: rage, consume and devour or *chalah* (also to make weak; cf. 7.5 but not noted there), *kalah* (also to make sick; no reference corresponding to this found) and *'akal* (to devour, cf. 5.7). Vs. 7 follows through quickly on the heels of this total destruction, if you will, beginning with the conjunctive *v-* which goes untranslated. Although a footnote in the **RSV** says the first part of vs. 7 is uncertain, use of “my people” makes the situation all the more poignant especially when they are to be put under the yoke (*hol*, cf. vs. 4).

Yet once more the Lord does not fail to abandon Israel. In vs. 8 he comes off with four exclamations made aloud and intended for all to hear. The first is with regard to the impossibility of giving up Ephraim, the text reading literally as “how I shall give you.” The second is how he can hand over Israel, the verb being *magan* which has two other biblical references (Gn 14.20 and Prov 4.9), the latter being quoted here: “She will place on your head a fair garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful

crown.” The third is with regard to Admah and the fourth concerns Zeboiim, two cities which were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Lord continues in vs. 8 first by saying that his heart (*lev*) recoils or quite poignantly “turns upon me,” the verb being *haphak* (cf. 10.2 and 7.8 respectively). *Haphak* seems to indicate both a revulsion and inclination with regard to Israel. The latter sentiment is borne out by the Lord’s compassion or becoming both warm and tender which reads literally “they are aflame comforting me.” The verb is *kamar* and noun (plural) *nichumym*, both of which having three other biblical references. As to *kamar*, cf. 1Kg 3.26: “Because her heart yearned for her son.” As to *nichumym*, cf. Is 57.18: “I will lead him and requite him with comfort.”

Vs. 9 continues with the Lord being favorable to his people despite not having received any response from them. Nevertheless, this does not stop him. Although he has an anger which is fierce, *charon* being both noun and adjective here, he will not carry it out or literally do it, *hasah* (cf. 8.14). “He let loose on them his fierce anger, wrath, indignation and distress” [Ps 78.9]. Such restraint is shown toward Ephraim which he won’t destroy once more, this reading literally as “I shall return to ruin,” *shuv* and *shachat* (cf. vs. 5 and 9.9 respectively).

In vs. 9 the Lord reveals the reason why he has put up with such persistent rebellion which is simply that he is God and not a man, ‘*El* and ‘*ysh*. Along with this basic distinction, he continues by saying that he is simply not the Holy One (the adjective *qadosh* (cf. vs. 12) but as in Israel’s very midst, *qerev* (cf. 5.4 but not noted there) also as in the very center. Because of this he won’t carry out a sentence of destruction or as the Hebrew text has it literally, won’t enter the city. As for this city, it can apply to Jerusalem.

Vs. 10 speaks of the people going after the Lord, the common verb *halak* (cf. 2.5) which appears simultaneous with the Lord roaring as a lion, *sha’ag*. “The Lord will roar from on high and from his holy habitation utter his voice” [Jer 25.30]. Such roaring also is intended to strike fear in those who are keeping the Israelites in exile, that is, in Egypt and Assyria. At this mighty roar that can be heard from miles the people will come home trembling, *charad* also in the previous verse. “The ends of the earth were afraid” [Is 41.5]. The image of birds and especially doves is used, the latter usually associated with dovecotes to which the Lord will return (*shuv*, cf. vs. 9) them.

Vs. 12 is 12.1 in the Hebrew text, the **RSV** being followed here.

Vs. 12 concludes this chapter with Ephraim and Israel being at odds with the Lord compared with Judah. As for Ephraim, it has encompassed the Lord with lies, *savav* (cf. 7.2) whereas Israel did the same with deceit, the two nouns being *kachash* and *mirmah*. Cf. 7.3 for the former and 12.7: “A trader in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress.” As for Judah, a footnote in the **RSV** says literally that he “roams with God” and is faithful to the Holy one, ‘*aman* being the verb (cf. 5.9). As for the **NIV**, it says “And Judah is unruly against god, even against the faithful Holy One.”

1) nahar, ‘ahav, qara’, 3) ragal, yadah, rapha’, 4) mashak, chevel, havoth, ‘ahavah, hol, 5) shuv, ma’en, shuv, 6) chalah, kalah, ‘akal, 8) magan, lev, haphak, kamar, nichumym, 9) charon, hasah, shuv, shachat, qadosh, qerev, 10) halak, sha’ag, 11) charad, 12) kachash, mirmah, ‘aman

Chapter Twelve

This new chapter commences with what has become so familiar, namely, that depressing rebellious attitude by Israel toward the Lord. Ephraim is herding the wind and pursuing the east wind which is equivalent to multiplying falsehood and violence. The verb is *ravah* which as noted with regard to 10.1 also means to increase, that concerning both *kazav* and *shod* (cf. 7.13 and 10.14 respectively, the latter not noted there). Practically speaking, this takes the form of making an economic alliance with Egypt and Assyria.

In vs. 2 Judah and Jacob are brought to attention, the Lord having an indictment against the former. This is rendered literally as “contention to the Lord with Judah,” the noun being *ryv* (cf. 4.1). Also the Lord includes Jacob last mentioned in 10.11 against whom he will do the following two things:

- 1) Punish (*paqad*, cf. 9.9) in accord with his behavior which is put in terms of ways or *derek* (cf. 4.9).
- 2) Requite him in accord with his deeds, the verb *shuv* and the noun *mahalal* (cf. 11.9 and 9.15 respectively).

In vss. 3 through 6 the Lord decides to stick with Jacob and give an account of his past encounter with the Lord described in the Book of Genesis. This may be outlined as follows which includes some excerpts from **Notes on the Book of Genesis**. These

references are in a different color and are in italics so they'll stand out better. Also note that reference to words are not given as found at the end of each chapter:

-Grabbed his brother Esau's heel when coming out of the womb. 25.26, 27.36

Vs. 25: Esau (Hesau): a play on Seir, the region of the Edomites (cf. vs. 30). Esau came from the womb red or '*admuny* which bears similarity to the proper name Edom. Perhaps his being the first born resembles the creation of the original first born man or Adam ('Red,' if you will), from the soil in 2.7. In this second instance attention shifts from the prerogative of birth to divine election.

-Hairy mantle ('adereth): in the sense of a wide or ample outer garment. "On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; he will not put on a hairy mantle in order to deceive" [Zech 13.4].

-When Jacob became a man he strove with God. 32.22-28

"The same night he arose:" literally, "he arose in that night" which accentuates this time of total darkness. Jacob takes his immediate family—apparently leaving his servants, etc, behind—and crossed (*havar*; cf. its use with regard to the gift for Esau, the previous verse) the ford (*mahavar*: derived from the verbal root *havar*) of the Jabbok. The next mention of this place is Num 21.24, "And Israel slew him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok."

Vs. 23: Two crossings (*havar*): Jacob's two wives, maids and eleven children plus "what was to him" as the Hebrew text literally reads. This crossing is with regards to a stream or *nachal*; this noun can apply to a river as well as a valley: "I went down to the nut orchard, to look at the blossoms of the valley" [Sg 6.11].

Vs. 24: Jacob was "left (*yatar*) alone." "Not a green thing remained" [Ex 10.15]. The simplicity of this short sentence—after Jacob's immediate relatives crossed the stream—sets the stage for the second half of this verse.

-Wrestled ('avaq): with an unidentified man, the common Hebrew word being used. This and a few other verses later in the same context are the only occasions when 'avaq is found which fundamentally means to pound, to make small and therefore implies a violent activity. Such wrestling lasted until the breaking of the day, so Jacob was unable to clearly identify the man.

Vs. 25: Prevail (*yachal*): as in 30.38, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." Compare the verbal root *patal* (as noted above with respect to that verse) with '*avaq* of vs. 24. Jacob was winning this contest owing to his exceptional strength:" Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well's mouth" [29.10].

-Touched (*nagah*): often in the sense of causing affliction or striking a blow: “But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues” [12.17]. Also 3.3 with another sense, “Neither shall you touch it” [3.3].

-“Hollow (*kaph*) of his thigh (*yarek*):” the former can apply to the hollow of one’s hand. For a reference to the latter, cf. 24.2: “Put your hand under my thigh.”

-Put out of joint (*yaqah*): that is, dislocated. “Let seven of his sons be given to us so that we may hang them up before the Lord at Gibeon on the mountain of the Lord” [2 Sam 21.6]. For another sense, cf. Jer 6.8: “Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I be alienated from you.”

Vs. 26: Bless (*barak*): which here is in the context of a new name for Jacob. Note that the person giving this blessing is the unidentified man, vs. 29. There seems no reason for Jacob to ask for a blessing, although the words of vss. 22-4 (or when Jacob sent his immediate family away and was left alone) intimate that something unusual was about to happen that night.

Vs. 27: The unidentified man does not seem certain with whom he is wrestling and thus asks his name. Then again, he may have known Jacob’s name but wanted to elicit a response so as to change it to Israel.

Vs. 28: The unidentified man changes Jacob’s name to Israel which can mean either “He who strives with God,” “God strives” or “God rules.” Also cf. 35.10.

-Striven (*sarah*). “He strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favor” [Hos 12.4]. From this verbal root is derived the noun princess as well as the proper name Sarah. Such striving is not only with God but with men, the same word in the plural used to refer to the unidentified man.

-Not only has Jacob engaged in this *sarah*, he has prevailed or *yachal* as in vs. 25.

-Strove with the angel and prevailed, having wept and sought his favor. 32.22-28

See the passage above related to “When Jacob became a man he strove with God.”

-Jacob met God at Bethel where God spoke with him, literally “to us.” There he realized the name of God as “Lord of Hosts.” 28.12-19

Vs. 12: Dreamed (*chalom*): The second mention of a dream in Genesis, the first being with respect to Abimelech, 20.3 & 6. *Chalom* fundamentally means to be fat; the idea seems to be that physical fatness disposes one to dream. Jacob’s dream can foreshadow that of his son, Joseph (37.5, etc.) which may be why he preferred him over his other eleven sons (‘Now Israel...Jacob...loved Joseph more than any other of his children,’ vs. 3).

-“That there was a ladder:” the Hebrew text has *hineh* or behold which may related to Jacob having come (*pagah*, the suddenness of his arrival in vs. 11) to that “certain place.”

- Ladder (*sulam*): the only occurrence of this word in the Bible; from the verbal root *salal*, to lift up, exalt. It is reminiscent of Jn 1.51: “You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” Note that this ladder is “set up.” No mention of a person(s) putting it in place which adds the mysterious character of Jacob’s dream.
- Top (*ro’sh*), that is, the ladder. This word is used with respect to the mountaintops visible as the flood was receding: “the tops of the mountains were seen” [8.5]; *ro’sh* also means head.
- The top of this ladder reached (*nagah*) heaven. Cf. 3.3 where it alternately means to touch: “Neither shall you touch it, lest you die.” Note that the ladder does not reach heaven but “to heaven.”
- Behold (*hineh*): cf. the beginning of this verse, to introduce the second half as well as to complement the first half.
- Angels (*mal’ak*): reminiscent of 24.7, “he will send his angel before you” with respect to Abraham’s servant to fetch a wife for Isaac, Jacob’s father. In the verse at hand, we have a generic mention of such angels (of God) engaged in the process of ascending and descending. Note that the former comes first which may parallel with the (passive) setting up of the ladder.
- “On it:” i.e., the ladder. The preposition *b-* is used, literally, in.
- Vs. 13: This verse begins with *hineh*, behold.
- “The Lord stood (*natsav*) above (*hal*) it.” The verb intimates a firm, unmoving position; for another use, cf. Ps 39.6: “Surely man goes about as a shadow!” The Hebrew literally reads, “firmly standing as vanity.” The preposition *hal* means both on as well as beside.
- From this “firm position—on top of the ladder or beside it/Jacob—the Lord addresses Jacob saying that he is the “God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac.” Note that technically Abraham is Jacob’s grandfather; perhaps the Lord wishes to show the superiority of Abraham not just for him but for future generations. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works” [Jms 2.21]? Also cf. 26.24 which posits Abraham as “your father”...right so according to physical lineage with respect to Isaac.
- Land (*‘erets*): not just the soil but land as a kind of expanded *maqom* noted in vs. 11 (‘he came to a certain place’), freighted with religious significance. Jacob is laying (*shakav*) on this land: cf. vs. 11 where this verb means to sleep.
- The Lord does not give the *‘erets* only to Jacob but to his descendants (*zerah*, as in vs. 4).
- Vs. 14: Jacob’s future descendants are to be as dust (*haphar*) not as from physical soil but again, as of the *‘erets*. As for the significance of this dust, cf. 13.15 in relationship to Abraham. Also note under 18.27 which gives other references to this term.

-Spread abroad (*parats*): basically as to break, to destroy. For a parallel use: “But the more they were oppressed, multiplied and spread abroad” [Ex 1.12].

-This spreading (‘breaking’) of ‘*erets*-dust goes to the four cardinal points of north, south, east, west...as if to say that this special material expands outwards to cover the entire earth.

-“Bless themselves:” the Hebrew text reads, “be blessed” as opposed to God blessing them. Perhaps the ‘*erets*-dust acted as a kind of incense or holy material which imparted this divine blessing.

Vs. 15: This verse begins with yet another *hineh* (behold) which seems to indicate the special importance of what God is saying. Note the sequence of this verse with different tenses and the movement into and from different places:

-“With you:” present tense concerning Jacob as an individual person.

-“Will keep (*shamar*) you” or future tense with respect to wherever Jacob goes. Cf. 18.19: “to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.”

-“Will bring you back” or future tense with respect to Jacob as an individual person concerning “this land” or ‘*adamah*, that is, not the ‘*ertz*, which signifies the land of sojourning in which he finds himself.

-“Will not leave (*hazav*) you.” This verb in the future tense can apply to a sense of abandonment.

-“Until I have done:” past tense intended with respect to a future action. It seems that once the Lord accomplishes this through that “of which I have spoken (past tense),” he will “leave” Jacob.

Vs. 16: awoke (from sleep) or *yaqats* as concerning Noah (9.24) and Pharaoh (41.4), which brings to and end Jacob’s dream and begins his response to it through the end of this chapter.

-Place (*maqom*): with respect to the Lord being there without Jacob realizing...knowing (*yadah*) it.

Vs. 17: Afraid/awesome: from the same verb *yare’*. The former is with respect to Jacob and the latter with respect to this place or *maqom*.

-“House (*beyth*) of God” and “gate (*shahar*) of heaven.” The two seem to be different yet have the same *maqom*.

Vs. 18: Rose early in the morning (*shakam*): as in 20.8, 21.14, 22.3. “Let us go out early to the vineyards” [Sg 7.13].

-The stone (‘*oven*) becomes a pillar (*matsevah*), signifying the transformation of this inanimate object into a divine symbol. Note that *matsevah* is derived from the verbal root *natsav* mentioned in vs. 13 (stand above) or the Lord’s position concerning the ladder of Jacob’s dream. It is as though such divine standing becomes incarnate in this pillar. “And he (Moses) built an altar...and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel” [Ex 24.14].

-Poured (*yatsaq*): compared with 31.13 where in another dream God reminds Jacob that he had anointed this pillar.

-Head (*ro'sh*): as used in vs. 12, top of the ladder and Jacob's own head. Pouring oil upon it may indicate that the pillar was no higher than Jacob.

Vs. 19: Jacob calls this *maqom* Bethel or House of God, apparently preferring the house over the gate, both of which were just noted in vs. 17.

-Luz: the former name of "that place" (*maqom*); from the verbal root *luts*, to stammer, deride, and may have an echo with the tower of Babel where the one language of the world became divided.

Vs. 6 begins with the Lord addressing Jacob, having reminded him of his past encounters, and puts forth three requests:

1) Return (*shuv*, cf. vs. 2) which reads literally "you in God."

2) Hold fast or *shamar* (cf. 4.10), more as to keep guard with respect to love and justice, *chesed* and *mishpat* (cf. 10.12 and 6.5 respectively).

3) Wait continually for God, *qavah* connoting strength. "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord" [Ps 27.14]! In the verse at hand, such waiting is to be done continually, *tamyd*. "I have set the Lord always before me" [Ps 16.8].

After this positive interval, if you will, Chapter Twelve continues the familiar roller coaster ride of rebellion/reconciliation, etc. In vs. 7 he accuses Ephraim of having false balances and loving to oppress (*hasaq*, cf. 5.11 but not noted there), most likely those from whom he's extracting money. Despite these ill-gains of which Ephraim loves to boast, never will they be able to offset any guilt (*havon*, cf. 10.10) which he had incurred.

The Lord counters this by referring to Israel's stay in Egypt from which he had delivered the people. Such deliverance is conditioned upon their acknowledgment that he is the "Lord your God," also noted in 13.4. In the Sinai desert they learned to come to grips with what's depicted in the Book of Hosea as that often noted alteration between trust and rebellion. However, never did the people become capable of shaking that off, for it continued once in Canaan and even later when the kingdom was established. Nevertheless, it remained a discernable pattern to which such people as prophets could refer and work from.

In the desert the Lord will make his people dwell in tents, this lasting for some forty years. However, vs. 9 puts this in the context of "days of the appointed feast" (*mohed*,

cf. 9.5) which most likely refers to the Feast of Tabernacles as outlined in Leviticus 23.23+ and summed up in vs. 24: “You shall do no laborious work; and you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord.”

In addition to the *mohed*, in vs. 10 the Lord reminds the people of three things he had done on their behalf:

- 1) How he had spoken (*davar*, cf. 10.4) literally “upon (*hal-*) the prophets.”
- 2) Multiplied visions, *ravah* (cf. vs. 1) and *chazon*. For the latter, cf. Ps 89.19: “Of old you spoke in a vision to your faithful one.”
- 3) Through (literally, ‘in the hand of’) the prophets the Lord gave parables, *damah* fundamentally as to like which is the nature of such a tool. “To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him” [Is 40.25]?

There follows in vs. 11 two “ifs” according to the **RSV** though the second in the Hebrew follows from the first. Implied are past instances when Gilead had incurred iniquity or ‘*aven* as in 6.8; also cf. “the high places of Aven” in 10.8. I.e., there would follow *shave*’, fundamentally as vanity (cf. 10.4).

The second “if” (contained in the first) pertains to Gilgal (cf. 9.15) with regard to sacrificing bulls upon altars which will turn into ruins.

In vss. 12 and 13 we have what seems a continuation of the Lord speaking about Jacob and Israel. First in line is Jacob who fled to Aram and was at the service of Laban in order to marry Rachel, having done that for a good number of years. The common verb *havad* is an apt verb to describe this extended stay, for often it applies to a slave. Second comes Israel when a prophet brought Israel from Egypt, this obviously being Moses. So toward the end of Chapter Twelve the Lord is reminding his people of these notables from their history both to encourage and to shame them in returning to him.

The chapter comes to a close with Ephraim having provoked “him” which seems to refer to the Lord, the verb being *kahas* which connotes a sense of exasperation. “Because of the anger to which he (King Jeroboam) provoked the Lord, the God of Israel” [1Kg 15.30]. The result of such provocation is twofold. First the Lord will leave blood guilt (second word not in the Hebrew text) upon him, *natash* as to leave or to let go. “He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among men” [Ps 78.60]. Second, the Lord will make his reproaches fall back (*shuv*, cf. vs. 6)

upon Ephraim, *cherpah* also as scorn or contempt. “Remove from me my reproach” [Ps 119.22].

1) ravah, kazav, shod, 2) ryv, paqad, derek, shuv, mahalal, 6) shuv, shamar, chesed, mishpat, qavah, tamyd, 7) hashaq, 8) havon, 9) mohed, 10) davar, ravah, chazon, damah, 11) ‘aven, shave’, 12) havad, 13) natash, shuv, cherpah

Chapter Thirteen

The verb *davar* (cf. 12.10) is used with regard to Ephraim, that is, word-as-expression, which caused those listening to tremble or *retet* which is a noun and the only use of it in the Bible. Reference is to Jacob’s blessing recounted in Gn 48.10-20 after which this tribe enjoyed predominance for having been exalted, *nasa’* meaning to raise (cf. 4.8). Nevertheless, Ephraim incurred guilt by worshiping Baal which brought about his death. “Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone” [4.17].

Vs. 2 speaks of “they” which seems to refer to the Israelites, taking into consideration the death of Ephraim just noted. Perhaps the death of this tribe spurred the other eleven to increase in their sinning by fashioning molten images, *masekah* immediately suggestive of what Aaron had done. “And he received the gold at their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a molten calf”? [Ex 32.4]. Skilled craftsmen were employed to carry this out. If making sacrifices to such idols weren’t bad enough, men kissed them which will make them fade like mist or dew, chaff or smoke also being thrown in to emphasize the transitory nature of such images and the worship given them.

In contrast to Ephraim’s self-importance and Israel’s tendency to worship idols (i.e., nothing new, of course), vs. 3 has the Lord intervening—almost dying to do so—claiming to be Israel’s God who brought his people from Egypt as echoed in 12.9. Then he says something a bit inconsistent or apparently so. That is to say, his people know (*yadah*, cf. 11.3) no other God who alone is their savior (literally as ‘one saving’), the verb being *yashah* (cf. 1.7).

In vs. 5 the Lord stresses the importance of *yadah* mentioning it a second time in a row or in reference to the wilderness. However, that came to an abrupt stop after the people ate to their full which in Hebrew reads literally as “according to their pasture.” Such fullness made them forgetful of the Lord, this reminiscent of 2.13 which says simply, “and forgot me, says the Lord.” Such forgetfulness got the Lord

so angry that he rants on for the rest of this chapter. He likens himself to three wild beasts, the fiercest he can think of : lion, leopard and bear.

In vs. 9 the Lord says that he will destroy his people, *shachat* (cf. 11.9), and no one can come to their aide, this reading literally as “for in me.” *Hezer* is a noun for aide or help which he puts as a rhetorical sentence. “Send your help from the sanctuary” [Ps 20.2]. This is followed by a second rhetorical sentence in vs. 10 where the Lord asks where is their king to save (*yashah*, cf. vs. 4); the same applies to princes. As for this verse, it has a number of variations most likely because the verse is somewhat corrupt. As for such rulers, in vs. 11 the Lord says that he has both given and taken away kings, he alone having the authority to do this, something the people clearly have forgotten. The Lord does this in both anger and in wrath, ‘*aph* and *hevrah* (cf. 11.9 and 5.10 respectively, the former not noted there).

In vs. 12 the Lord returns to speaking of Ephraim’s iniquity and sin (*havon* and *chata’th* (cf. 10.8 and 12.8 respectively, the former not noted there), the two words associated with them being *tsarar* and *tsaphan*. The former is noted in 4.17 while the latter also connotes hiding. “For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble” [Ps 27.5].

In vs. 13 the Lord likens Ephraim to an unwise son, *chakam* being the adjective as in 14.9: “Whoever is wise, let him understand these things.” This lack of wisdom prevents Ephraim from coming to birth, not unlike a stillborn baby. This leads the Lord in vs. 14 to ask four rhetorical questions in rapid succession, more a wondering aloud so that Ephraim can hear them and take notice:

1) Ransom from the power of Sheol, this being the first mention in the Book of Hosea and found here twice. *Padah* (cf. 7.13) is the verb meaning to ransom and “hand” is the noun for “power.”

2) Redeem from death, the verb being *ga’al* which connotes a setting free and used often with the preposition *min-* or “from.” “So he saved them from the hand of the foe and delivered them from the power of the enemy” [Ps 106.10].

3) The plagues of death, *dever* coming from the verbal root *davar*. “Nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes a noonday” [Ps 91.6].

4) The destruction of Sheol, *qotev* being the only occurrence in the Bible.

After this fourfold threat the Lord comes off with a simple statement, namely, that compassion is hidden from his eyes, as though it has a life on its own and decides to

leave the Lord. *Nocham* is the noun, the only occurrence in the Bible, and is derived from the verbal root *nacham* also suggestive of comfort. As for the verb *satar*, usually it implies a personal relationship as well as covering, cf. Ps 55.12: “then I could hide from him.”

The concluding two verses of Chapter Thirteen (i.e., 15 and 16) suggest the impending invasion by Assyria after which the people went into exile. Reference to the treasury or ‘*otsar* can refer to anything in the king’s possession such as his armory as well as the temple and its emptying during this invasion. “A sword is upon all her treasures that they may be plundered” [Jer 50.37]!

Vs. 16 forms vs. 1 of Chapter Fourteen. The numbering of the **RSV** is maintained here.

In vs. 16 the Lord turns attention to Samaria which because of her rebellion, will perish in a frightful way, her children and wives being singled out for special punishment and death. *Marah* is the verb made all the more severe by reason of the preposition *b-* being prefaced to God, literally “rebelled in God.” “Because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against me” [Ps 5.10].

1) *davar*, *retet*, *nasa'*, 2) *masekah*, 4) *yadah*, *yashah*, 5) *yadah*, 9) *shachat*, *hezer*, 11) ‘*aph*, *hevrah*, 12) *havon*, *chata'th*, *tsarar*, *tsaphan*, 13) *chakam*, 14) *padah*, *ga'al*, *dever*, *nocham*, *satar*, 15) ‘*otsar*, *marah*

Chapter Fourteen

After having gone through a roller coaster ride for the past thirteen chapters—rebellion to reconciliation to rebellion to reconciliation—we know that this has to come to a stop and to do so as quickly as possible. And so Chapter Fourteen brings this painful alteration to a conclusion with the opening word “return” or *shuv* (cf. 12.12) which has occurred a number of times in Hosea. Hopefully this will be that last *shuv* but given human nature, it is simply one among many. All these alterations can and leave an uncomfortable feeling insofar as they seem to have no end. That’s one of the beauties of the Book of Hosea. Towards the end we realize this is the pattern we must deal with. Living with it, not attempting to alter it, is the challenge.

As for the reason of this *shuv*, the Lord says that Israel has stumbled due to her iniquity, the verb *kashal* (cf. 5.8) with the noun *havon* (cf. 13.12) and reads literally “you have stumbled in (b-) your iniquity.”

In vs. 2 Israel is counseled to speak (*amar*, cf. 7.2) to the Lord, this continuing through vs. 3. Note that in vs. 2 the verb “take” is found twice, *laqach* and *nasa'* (cf. 13.1), the latter more along the lines of raising up. *Laqach* is with regard to Israel's *davar* (cf. 10.3) followed by that *shuv* which begins this chapter. This leads to asking the Lord to *nasa'*—almost to lift up and away from—*havon* or iniquity. Israel isn't to stop there. She is to accept (a second instance of *laqach*) whatever is good and offer the fruit of her lips, the verb being *shalam* which like the noun *shalom* derived from it suggests completeness, of full restitution. “If the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery...he shall surely live” [Ezk 33.15].

In vs. 3 Israel is compelled to admit that she won't find salvation in Assyria, *yashah* (cf. 13.4). Even more importantly and pleasing to the Lord, she will renounce worship of anything made on her own. This is put directly as “we will say no more,” *hod* suggestive of repetition. Then Israel will exclaim that the orphan...surely this applying to herself...will find mercy in the Lord, *racham* (cf. 2.23).

After having given a confession of sorts in the last two verses, the Lord chimes in with the promise of healing for Israel's faithlessness, *rapha'* and *mshuvah* (cf. 11.3 and 11.7, the latter not noted there). As for *mshuvah*, it means literally a backsliding. He continues in the same verse with a promise to love Israel freely, *ahav* (cf. 11.1) and *ndavah* which is a noun meaning a freewill offering. “With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you” [Ps 54.6]. To reassure Israel further the Lord adds that he has turned back his anger, *aph* and *shuv* (cf. 13.11 and vs. 2 respectively), the latter being an invitation or strong hint tied in with the *shuv* noted several times in this chapter.

In vs. 5 the Lord says that he will be as dew to Israel, causing her to blossom and spread out shoots as well as producing olives to which his beauty is compared, *hod* connoting majesty and dignity. “You whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouth of babes and infants” [Ps 8.1-2]. In the same verse the Lord throws in a scent Israel will give off not like the fragrance of Lebanon, *reyach* which is of the same verbal root for *ruach* (wind, spirit). “Your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is oil poured out” [Sg 1.3]. As for Lebanon, chances are this can refer to the scent of its famous cedars.

Vs. 7 brings up again the verb *shuv*, this time Israel doing it freely with respect to the Lord's shadow (*tsel*, cf. 4.13 but not noted there) where she will be as a garden, the Hebrew literally as "they shall grow grain." Once again *reyach* (cf. vs. 6) is noted concerning Lebanon. Note the emphasis upon Israel giving scent as through lilies, implied cedars and vines, this clearly indicative of an inner conversion which spreads outward for all to smell.

In vs. 8 the Lord addresses Ephraim by means of a rhetorical question, that he has nothing to do with idols, *hatsav* (cf. 8.4). He's more concerned with a reciprocal relationship, one of answering and looking after, *hanah* (cf. 2.21) and *shor* (cf. 13.7 but not noted there). *Shor* connotes a regarding or beholding which signals coming to one's attention. In this same verse the Lord likens himself to an evergreen cypress (*brosh*) which gives Israel its fruit. "The cypresses rejoice at you" [Is 14.8].

Vs. 9 or the last verse of this book concludes not unlike Prov 4.11 & 13: "I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness. Keep hold of instruction, do not let go; guard her, for she is your life." In the verse at hand note wise, understand and discern and know, all Wisdom-like attributes: *chakam* (cf. 13.13), *byn* (cf. 4.14), *byn* (second use) and *yadah* (cf. 13.5). The four are in reference to "these things" or what the Lord had said in Chapter Fourteen as well as all the vicissitudes Israel had experienced.

The second half of vs. 9 is reminiscent of the last verse of Ecclesiastes where the preacher continues to address the person with whom he's speaking as a son. In the verse at hand, the Lord's ways are right, *derek* (cf. 12.2) and *yashar*, this adjective implying straightness. "They (wisdom's words) are all straight to him who understands and right to those who find knowledge" [Prov 8.9]. For in these "straight" roads the righteous will walk while transgressors will fall, *tsadyq* and *pashah* (cf. 7.13). As for the former, cf. Prov 4.18: "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn."

1) *shuv*, *kashal*, *havon*, 2) *laqach*, *davar*, *shuv*, 'amar, *nasa'*, *havon*, *laqach*, *shalam*, 3) *yashah*, *racham*, 4) *rapha'*, *mshuvah*, 'ahav, *ndavah*, 'aph, *shuv*, 6) *hod*, *reyach*, 7) *shuv*, *tsel*, *reyach*, 8) *hatsav*, *hanah*, *shor*, *brosh*, *derek*, *yashar*, *tsadyq*, *pashah*

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