

## Hosea's Prophecy to Israel—Indictment, Punishment and Restoration – Part 1 (c. 743 BC)

### Hosea 4–9

#### Jezreel: A General Complaint

- 4:1 Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel,  
 For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land,  
 Because there is no faithfulness or kindness  
 Or knowledge of God in the land.
- 2 *There is* swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery.  
 They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.
- 3 Therefore the land mourns,  
 And everyone who lives in it languishes  
 Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky,  
 And also the fish of the sea disappear.

#### Lo-Ammi: Three Guilty Groups—Priests, Common People and Women

- 4 Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof;  
 For your people are like those who contend with the priest.
- 5 So you will stumble by day,  
 And the prophet also will stumble with you by night;  
 And I will destroy your mother.
- 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.  
 Because you have rejected knowledge,  
 I also will reject you from being My priest.  
 Since you have forgotten the law of your God,  
 I also will forget your children.
- 7 The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me;  
 I will change their glory into shame.
- 8 They feed on the sin of My people  
 And direct their desire toward their iniquity. [cf. [Lev 6:26–30](#); [Heb 13:10–11](#)]
- 9 And it will be, like people, like priest;  
 So I will punish them for their ways  
 And repay them for their deeds.
- 10 They will eat, but not have enough;  
 They will play the harlot, but not increase,  
 Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD.
- 11 Harlotry, wine and new wine take away the understanding.
- 12 My people consult their wooden idol, and their *diviner's* wand informs them;  
 For a spirit of harlotry has led *them* astray,  
 And they have played the harlot, *departing* from their God.
- 13 They offer sacrifices on the tops of the mountains  
 And burn incense on the hills,  
 Under oak, poplar and terebinth,  
 Because their shade is pleasant.  
 Therefore your daughters play the harlot  
 And your brides commit adultery.
- 14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot  
 Or your brides when they commit adultery,  
 For *the men* themselves go apart with harlots

And offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes;  
So the people without understanding are ruined. [cf. [Prov 10:8, 10](#)]

### **Lo-Ruhamah: Three Warnings for Israel and Judah**

- 15 Though you, Israel, play the harlot,  
Do not let Judah become guilty;  
Also do not go to Gilgal,  
Or go up to Beth-aven  
And take the oath:  
“As the LORD lives!”
- 16 Since Israel is stubborn  
Like a stubborn heifer,  
Can the LORD now pasture them  
Like a lamb in a large field?
- 17 Ephraim is joined to idols;  
Let him alone.
- 18 Their liquor gone,  
They play the harlot continually;  
Their rulers dearly love shame.
- 19 The wind wraps them in its wings,  
And they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.
- 5:1 Hear this, O priests!  
Give heed, O house of Israel!  
Listen, O house of the king!  
For the judgment applies to you,  
For you have been a snare at Mizpah  
And a net spread out on Tabor.
- 2 The revoltors have gone deep in depravity,  
But I will chastise all of them.
- 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me;  
For now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot,  
Israel has defiled itself.
- 4 Their deeds will not allow them  
To return to their God.  
For a spirit of harlotry is within them,  
And they do not know the LORD.
- 5 Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him,  
And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity;  
Judah also has stumbled with them.
- 6 They will go with their flocks and herds  
To seek the LORD, but they will not find *Him*;  
He has withdrawn from them.
- 7 They have dealt treacherously against the LORD,  
For they have borne illegitimate children.  
Now the new moon will devour them with their land.
- 8 Blow the horn in Gibeah,  
The trumpet in Ramah.  
Sound an alarm at Beth-aven:  
“Behind you, Benjamin!”

- 9 Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke;  
Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure.
- 10 The princes of Judah have become like those who move a boundary;  
On them I will pour out My wrath like water.
- 11 Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment,  
Because he was determined to follow *man's* command.
- 12 Therefore I am like a moth to Ephraim  
And like rottenness to the house of Judah.
- 13 When Ephraim saw his sickness,  
And Judah his wound,  
Then Ephraim went to Assyria  
And sent to King Jareb. [cf. [2 Kgs 15:19](#)]  
But he is unable to heal you,  
Or to cure you of your wound.
- 14 For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim  
And like a young lion to the house of Judah.  
I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away,  
I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver.
- 15 I will go away *and* return to My place  
Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face;  
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

### The Prophet's Call to Repent

- 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD.  
For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us;  
He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us.
- 2 "He will revive us after two days;  
He will raise us up on the third day, [cf. possible connection to [1 Cor 15:4](#)]  
That we may live before Him.
- 3 "So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD.  
His going forth is as certain as the dawn;  
And He will come to us like the rain,  
Like the spring rain watering the earth."

### Yahweh's Frustration

- 4 What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?  
What shall I do with you, O Judah?  
For your loyalty is like a morning cloud  
And like the dew which goes away early.
- 5 Therefore I have hewn *them* in pieces by the prophets;  
I have slain them by the words of My mouth;  
And the judgments on you are *like* the light that goes forth.
- 6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice,  
And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. [[Matt 9:13; 12:7](#)]

### Sins of Adam, Gilead and Shechem

- 7 But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant;  
There they have dealt treacherously against Me.
- 8 Gilead is a city of wrongdoers,

Tracked with bloody *footprints*.

- 9 And as raiders wait for a man,  
So a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem;  
Surely they have committed crime.

### **Apostasy of Ephraim—and Judah**

- 10 In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;  
Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel has defiled itself.  
11a Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you,

### **Unforgiven Sins of Israel, Ephraim and Samaria**

- 11b When I restore the fortunes of My people.  
7:1 When I would heal Israel,  
The iniquity of Ephraim is uncovered,  
And the evil deeds of Samaria,  
For they deal falsely;  
The thief enters in,  
Bandits raid outside,  
2 And they do not consider in their hearts  
That I remember all their wickedness.  
Now their deeds are all around them;  
They are before My face.  
3 With their wickedness they make the king glad,  
And the princes with their lies.  
4 They are all adulterers,  
Like an oven heated by the baker  
Who ceases to stir up *the fire*  
From the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.  
5 On the day of our king, the princes became sick with the heat of wine;  
He stretched out his hand with scoffers,  
6 For their hearts are like an oven  
As they approach their plotting;  
Their anger smolders all night,  
In the morning it burns like a flaming fire.  
7 All of them are hot like an oven,  
And they consume their rulers;  
All their kings have fallen.  
None of them calls on Me.

### **Folly of Ephraim**

- 8 Ephraim mixes himself with the nations;  
Ephraim has become a cake not turned.  
9 Strangers devour his strength,  
Yet he does not know *it*;  
Gray hairs also are sprinkled on him,  
Yet he does not know *it*.  
10 Though the pride of Israel testifies against him,  
Yet they have not returned to the LORD their God,  
Nor have they sought Him, for all this.

- 11 So Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without sense;  
They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.
- 12 When they go, I will spread My net over them;  
I will bring them down like the birds of the sky.  
I will chastise them in accordance with the proclamation to their assembly.

### **Yahweh's Lament**

- 13 Woe to them, for they have strayed from Me!  
Destruction is theirs, for they have rebelled against Me!  
I would redeem them, but they speak lies against Me.
- 14 And they do not cry to Me from their heart  
When they wail on their beds;  
For the sake of grain and new wine they assemble themselves,  
They turn away from Me.
- 15 Although I trained *and* strengthened their arms,  
Yet they devise evil against Me.
- 16 They turn, *but* not upward,  
They are like a deceitful bow;  
Their princes will fall by the sword  
Because of the insolence of their tongue.  
This *will be* their derision in the land of Egypt.

### **Broken Covenant and Shattered Calf**

- 8:1 *Put* the trumpet to your lips!  
Like an eagle *the enemy comes* against the house of the LORD,  
Because they have transgressed My covenant  
And rebelled against My law.
- 2 They cry out to Me,  
“My God, we of Israel know You!”
- 3 Israel has rejected the good;  
The enemy will pursue him.
- 4 They have set up kings, but not by Me;  
They have appointed princes, but I did not know *it*.  
With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves,  
That they might be cut off.
- 5 He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, *saying*,  
“My anger burns against them!”  
How long will they be incapable of innocence?
- 6 For from Israel is even this!  
A craftsman made it, so it is not God;  
Surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces.

### **Calling Egypt and Assyria**

- 7 For they sow the wind  
And they reap the whirlwind.  
The standing grain has no heads;  
It yields no grain.  
Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up.
- 8 Israel is swallowed up;

- They are now among the nations  
Like a vessel in which no one delights.
- 9 For they have gone up to Assyria,  
*Like* a wild donkey all alone;  
Ephraim has hired lovers.
- 10 Even though they hire *allies* among the nations,  
Now I will gather them up;  
And they will begin to diminish  
Because of the burden of the king of princes.
- 11 Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin,  
They have become altars of sinning for him.
- 12 Though I wrote for him ten thousand *precepts* of My law,  
They are regarded as a strange thing.
- 13 As for My sacrificial gifts,  
They sacrifice the flesh and eat *it*,  
*But* the LORD has taken no delight in them.  
Now He will remember their iniquity,  
And punish *them* for their sins;  
They will return to Egypt.
- 14 For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces;  
And Judah has multiplied fortified cities,  
But I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume its palatial dwellings.

#### **From Festival Days to Punishment Days**

- 9:1 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with exultation like the nations!  
For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God.  
You have loved *harlots'* earnings on every threshing floor.
- 2 Threshing floor and wine press will not feed them,  
And the new wine will fail them.
- 3 They will not remain in the LORD's land,  
But Ephraim will return to Egypt,  
And in Assyria they will eat unclean *food*.
- 4 They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the LORD,  
Their sacrifices will not please Him.  
*Their bread will be* like mourners' bread;  
All who eat of it will be defiled,  
For their bread will be for themselves *alone*;  
It will not enter the house of the LORD.
- 5 What will you do on the day of the appointed festival  
And on the day of the feast of the LORD?
- 6 For behold, they will go because of destruction;  
Egypt will gather them up, Memphis will bury them.  
Weeds will take over their treasures of silver;  
Thorns *will be* in their tents.
- 7 The days of punishment have come,  
The days of retribution have come;  
Let Israel know *this*!  
The prophet is a fool,  
The inspired man is demented,

Because of the grossness of your iniquity,  
And *because* your hostility is *so* great.

8 Ephraim *was* a watchman with my God, a prophet;  
Yet the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways,  
And there is *only* hostility in the house of his God.

9 They have gone deep in depravity  
As in the days of Gibeah;  
He will remember their iniquity,  
He will punish their sins.

### **Ephraim Rejected, Exiled and Unloved**

10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness;  
I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first *season*.  
But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame,  
And they became as detestable as that which they loved.

11 As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird—  
No birth, no pregnancy and no conception!

12 Though they bring up their children,  
Yet I will bereave them until not a man is left.  
Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them!

13 Ephraim, as I have seen,  
Is planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre;  
But Ephraim will bring out his children for slaughter.

14 Give them, O LORD—what will You give?  
Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

15 All their evil is at Gilgal;  
Indeed, I came to hate them there!  
Because of the wickedness of their deeds  
I will drive them out of My house!  
I will love them no more;  
All their princes are rebels.

16 Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up,  
They will bear no fruit.  
Even though they bear children,  
I will slay the precious ones of their womb.

17 My God will cast them away  
Because they have not listened to Him;  
And they will be wanderers among the nations.