

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

Hosea 4–9

Jezreel: A General Complaint

- 4:1 Hear the word of Yahweh, O children of Israel,
for Yahweh has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land.
There is no faithfulness or loyalty,
there is no knowledge of God in the land.
- 2 Swearing and lying,
murdering and stealing,
and adultery break out,
and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
- 3 Therefore the land mourns,
and all *those* living in it languish
with the animals of the field,
and the birds of the heaven,
and even the fish of the sea
are being swept away.

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

- 4 Yet, let no one contend,
and let no one accuse,
for with you, O priest, *is my* contention.
- 5 You will stumble *by* day,
and the priest also will stumble
with you at night.
And I will destroy your mother;
- 6 My people are destroyed
for lack of knowledge;
because you have rejected knowledge,
I reject you from acting as a priest for me.
And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
I will also forget your children.
- 7 When they became many, their sin increased against me;
they changed their glory into shame.
- 8 They feed on the sin of my people,
they are greedy for their iniquity. [cf. [Lev 6:26–30](#); [Heb 13:10–11](#)]
- 9 And it will be like people, like priest;
I will punish them *for* their ways,
and I will requite them for their deeds.
- 10 They will eat and not be satisfied;
they will play the whore and not multiply,
because they have forsaken Yahweh to devote themselves to
whoredom.
Wine and new wine take away the understanding.
- 12 My people,
consult their wooden idols,
and their divining rod gives them oracles;
because a spirit of whoredom led *them* astray,
and they played the whore from under their God.
- 13 On the tops of the mountains they sacrifice,
and on the hills they make offerings,
under oak, poplar, and terebinth,
because their shade is good.
Therefore your daughters play the whore,
and all your daughters-in-law commit adultery.
- 14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore,
or your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery;
because they go aside with whores,

and they sacrifice with temple prostitutes,
a people that does not understand comes to ruin. [cf. [Prov 10:8, 10](#)]

Lo-Ruhamah: Three Warnings for Israel and Judah

- 15 Even though you, *O* Israel, *are* playing the whore,
do not let Judah become guilty;
do not enter Gilgal,
or go up to Beth-aven;
and do not swear,
“As Yahweh lives!”
- 16 Indeed, like a stubborn heifer,
Israel is stubborn;
Now Yahweh will feed them,
like a lamb in broad pasture.
- 17 Ephraim is joined to idols;
let him alone.
- 18 When their drinking has ended,
they surely indulge in sexual orgies.
They love lewdness more than their glory.
- 19 A wind has wrapped them in its wings,
and they will be ashamed because of their altars.
- 5:1 Hear this, *O* priests!
Give heed, *O* house of Israel!
Listen, *O* house of the king!
Because the judgment *applies* to you;
because you have been a snare for Mizpah,
and a net spread out on Tabor;
- 2 they dug a deep pit *in* Shittim,
but I *am* a punishment for all of them.
- 3 I myself know Ephraim,
and Israel is not hidden from me;
because now you have played the whore, *O* Ephraim—
Israel is defiled.
- 4 Their deeds do not permit them
to return them to God.
Because a spirit of whoredom *is* in their midst,
they do not know Yahweh.
- 5 The pride of Israel testifies against him,
and Israel and Ephraim stumble in their guilt,
and Judah stumbles with them.
- 6 With their flocks and herds they will go
to seek Yahweh, but they will not find him;
he has withdrawn from them.
- 7 They have dealt faithlessly with Yahweh
because they have borne illegitimate children.
Now *the* new moon will devour them with their fields.
- 8 Blow the horn in Gibeah,
the trumpet in Ramah.
Sound the alarm *in* Beth-aven;
look behind you, Benjamin.
- 9 Ephraim will be a desolation
in the day of punishment;
among the tribes of Israel
I will reveal what is true.
- 10 The princes of Judah have become
like those who remove a landmark;
on them I will pour out
my wrath like water.

- 11 Ephraim is oppressed,
crushed *in* judgment,
because he was determined
to go after filth.
- 12 But I *am* like a maggot to Ephraim
and like rottenness to the house of Judah.
- 13 And *when* Ephraim saw his illness,
and Judah his wound,
Ephraim went to Assyria,
he sent to the great king. [cf. [2 Kgs 15:19](#)]
But he was unable to cure you
and heal your wound.
- 14 Because I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim
and like a fierce strong lion to the house of Judah.
I myself will tear and I will go;
I will carry off, and there is no one who delivers.
- 15 I will return again to my place
until they acknowledge *their* guilt
and seek my face;
in their distress they will search me.

The Prophet's Call to Repent

- 6:1 Come, let us return to Yahweh;
because *it is* he who has torn, and he will heal us;
he has struck us down and will bind us up.
- 2 He will revive us after two days;
on the third day he will raise us up, [cf. possible connection to [1 Cor 15:4](#)]
that we may live in his presence.
- 3 Let us know, let us press on to know Yahweh;
his rising *is* sure like *the* dawn.
He will come like the showers to us,
like *the* spring rain that waters *the* earth.

Yahweh's Frustration

- 4 What will I do with you, O Ephraim?
What will I do with you, O Judah?
Your love *is* like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early in the morning.
- 5 Therefore, I have hewn *them* by *the* prophets;
I have killed them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth like the light.
- 6 Because I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. [[Matt 9:13; 12:7](#)]

Sins of Adam, Gilead and Shechem

- 7 But like Adam, they transgressed *the* covenant;
there they dealt faithlessly with me.
- 8 Gilead *is* a city of evil,
a cunning *city* because of blood.
- 9 Like bandits lying in wait,
so is a band of priests;
they murder *on the* road to Shechem;
indeed, they commit a monstrous crime.

Apostasy of Ephraim—and Judah

- 10 In the house of Israel I have seen something horrible;
Ephraim's unfaithfulness *is* there.
Israel is defiled.

11a For you also, *O* Judah, a harvest is appointed,

Unforgiven Sins of Israel, Ephraim and Samaria

11b when I restore the fortunes of my people,

7:1 when I would heal Israel,
and the corruption of Ephraim is revealed,
and the wicked deeds of Samaria;
because they deal *in* falsehood,
the thief breaks in,
and the bandit raids the outside.

2 But they did not consider
that I remember all their wickedness.
Now their deeds surround them;
they are before my face.

3 By their wickedness they make *the* king glad,
and *the* officials by their treacheries.

4 All of them commit adultery,
like a burning oven
whose baker has stopped from stirring the fire,
and from kneading *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 mockers.

6 Because they are kindled like an oven,
their heart burns within them;
all night their anger smolders,
in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.

7 All of them are hot as an oven,
and they devour their rulers.
All their kings have fallen;
there is none who calls to me amongst them.

Folly of Ephraim

8 Ephraim mixes himself
with the nations;
Ephraim is a bread cake
not turned over.

9 Foreigners devour his strength,
and he does not know *it*;
mold is also sprinkled upon him,
and he does not know *it*.

10 The pride of Israel testifies against him—
they do not return to Yahweh their God;
they do not seek him for all of this.

11 Ephraim was like a dove,
silly, without sense;
they call *to* Egypt,
they go *to* Assyria.

12 Just as they go, I will cast my net
over them;
I will bring them down
like the birds of the heavens;
I will discipline them
according to a report to their assembly.

Yahweh's Lament

13 Woe to them, because they have strayed from me!
Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me!

- I myself would redeem them,
but they speak lies against me.
- 14 They do not cry out to me from their heart,
but they wail on their beds;
because of grain and new wine they lacerate themselves;
they depart from me.
- 15 And I myself trained
and strengthened their arms;
but they plan evil against me.
- 16 They turn, not to the Most High,
like a slack bow;
their officials will fall by the sword
because of the anger of their tongue.
This *is* their scorn
in the land of Egypt.

Broken Covenant and Shattered Calf

- 8:1 *Put* to your lips *the* trumpet
like a vulture over the house of Yahweh,
because they have broken my covenant
and rebelled against my law.
- 2 They cry out to me,
“My God! We, Israel, know you!”
- 3 Israel has spurned *the* good;
the enemy will pursue him.
- 4 They appointed kings, but not through me;
they made officials, but without my knowledge.
With their silver and gold
they made idols for themselves
for their own destruction.
- 5 Your calf is rejected, *O* Samaria;
my anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of innocence?
- 6 Because *it is* from Israel,
an artisan made it,
it is not a god;
for the calf of Samaria
will be broken *to* pieces.

Calling Egypt and Assyria

- 7 Because they sow the wind,
they will reap the whirlwind.
The standing grain does not have heads;
it will not yield flour.
And if it would yield,
strangers would devour it.
- 8 Israel is swallowed up;
now they are among the nations,
like an object that no one desires.
- 9 For they have gone up *to* Assyria,
a wild donkey alone to itself;
Ephraim has sold itself *for* lovers.
- 10 Even though they have sold themselves to the nations,
now I will gather them.
They will soon writhe
from the burden of kings and princes.
- 11 When Ephraim multiplied altars
to expiate sins,

- they became to him altars to sin *on*.
- 12 I write for him myriads of my instruction;
they are regarded as a strange thing.
- 13 They offer sacrifices of my choice
and they eat flesh;
Yahweh does not accept them.
Now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins;
they will return *to* Egypt.
- 14 Israel has forgotten his maker and built palaces,
and Judah has multiplied fortified cities;
but I will send fire on his cities
and it will devour her strongholds.

From Festival Days to Punishment Days

- 9:1 Do not rejoice, *O* Israel,
do not exult like the nations!
For you played the whore, departing from your God;
you loved a harlot's wage
on all the threshing floors of grain.
- 2 Threshing floor and wine vat will not feed them,
and new wine will fail her.
- 3 They will not remain
in the land of Yahweh.
But Ephraim will return *to* Egypt,
and in Assyria they will eat unclean food.
- 4 They will not pour *drink offerings* of wine to Yahweh,
and their sacrifices will not please him.
They are like mourners' bread for them;
all those who eat it will be defiled.
For their bread will be for their hunger;
it will not come *to* the house of Yahweh.
- 5 What will you do on the day of *the* appointed time,
and on the day of the festival of Yahweh?
- 6 For look! *If* they flee from the destruction,
Egypt will gather them;
Memphis will bury them.
Nettles will possess
their precious things of silver;
thorns *will be* in their tents.
- 7 The days of punishment have come;
the days of retribution have come;
Israel knows!
The prophet *is* a fool,
the man of the spirit *is* acting like a madman.
Because of the greatness of your sin,
your hostility *is* great.
- 8 The prophet keeps watch *over* Ephraim for my God;
the snare of a fowler *is* on all his ways,
and hostility in the house of his God.
- 9 They deeply corrupted themselves
as *in* the days of Gibeah;
he will remember their sin,
he will punish their sins.

Ephraim Rejected, Exiled and Unloved

- 10 Like the grapes in the wilderness,
I found Israel.

- Like early ripened fruit on the fig tree in the first season,
I saw your ancestors.
They themselves came *to* Baal Peor,
and they consecrated themselves to shame.
And they became detestable things,
like the thing they love.
- 11 Ephraim's glory *is* like a bird;
it will fly away—
no birth, no pregnancy, and no conception.
- 12 Even though they bring up their children,
I will bereave them before maturity.
Woe to them indeed,
when I depart from them!
- 13 Ephraim, as I see *it*,
is like a palm in a meadow;
but Ephraim must bring out
his children to the slayer.
- 14 Give them, *O* Yahweh—
what will you give *them*?
Give them a miscarrying womb
and dry breasts.
- 15 Every evil of theirs *began* at Gilgal,
so I *began* to hate them there;
because of the evil of their deeds
I will drive them out from my house.
I will love them no more;
all their officials *are* rebels.
- 16 Ephraim is stricken,
their root is dried up,
they shall not bear fruit.
Even if they give birth,
I will kill the cherished offspring of their womb.
- 17 My God will reject them
because they did not listen to him,
and they will be wanderers among the nations.

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