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HOSEA: PROPHET OF GOD'S LOVE

A Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
THE TASK.....	1
LIMITATION.....	2
HISTORICAL STATEMENT.....	3
THE MAN.....	6
THE MESSAGE AND AUTHORSHIP.....	9
II. LITERARY UNITS AND STYLE IN HOSEA.....	12
III. HOSEA'S INTERPRETATION OF ISRAEL'S COVENANT	
HISTORY.....	17
IV. SIGNIFICENCE OF EMOTION EXPRESSED BY GOD.....	29
V. THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE TO DIVINE APPEAL....	40
GOD'S VIEW OF THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.....	41
THE PEOPLE'S VIEW OF THEIR OWN CONDITION.....	56
VI. IDOLATRY.....	61
VII. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS.....	74
THE POSITION INTO WHICH GOD WAS FORCED.....	74
THE CHOICE BEFORE THE PEOPLE.....	76
VIII. THE PROBLEM OF THE PROPHET'S MARRIAGE.....	77
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	82

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. The Literary Units In Hosea.. .. .	13
II. Words Of Emotion Referring To History.....	18
III. The Names Used To Designate God.. .. .	24
IV. Words Denoting Emotion In God.....	30
V. Words Denoting Emotion In The People.....	42
VI. Idolatry.. .. .	62

INTRODUCTION

The task. When attempting a thorough study of a book of the Bible such as Hosea, it is quite evident that there have been numerous volumes already written on the subject and from many different points of view. Perhaps the Preacher had the right perspective when he stated "..... and there is no new thing under the sun." (Ec.1:9)

However this study is not an attempt at something new but a review of the old. Many have easily found fault with Hosea even accusing him of a type of "perversion" and this has been evidently without a thorough study into the emotional conditioning of parties involved in the book. In such a study there naturally comes to light words classifying themselves into groupings which show contrast and similitude.

For this study each word of the text of Hosea has been indexed, and a classification made of the

emotional content of each word and those relating to it. The words have then been classified under six groups; those pertaining to God, people, idolatry, prophet, nature, and history. Of these groups there are subdivisions dealing with different aspects of emotion.

Also within this framework there is a breakdown of the groups mentioned above into the various literary units which are found in the book.

Limitation. In such a study as this, it is soon evident that the Lexicon will have to be leaned upon quite heavily whereas the material in commentaries and similar reference books is quite scanty. True, there are Hebrew word studies on some of these words but it is largely the same in each book rather than a wide variety and a few words are the focus of attention.

Perhaps the material which is presented here will seem rather brief but it would be impossible to fully deal with each of the words, for entire volumes have been written on a single word.

Historical statement. The period of prophecy of the prophet Hosea covered many years. The exact number can only be speculation but the majority of the conservative scholars agree that it must have lasted nearly sixty years. He records the fact that the word of Jehovah came to him from the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. and continued to the reign of Hezekiah. It is difficult to place an exact date to each prophecy as recorded in his book.

The name Hosea means salvation or deliverance - which was also the original name of Joshua, having been changed by Moses (Num.xiii. xvi.) This meaning of his name stands in sharp contrast with the judgment which he pronounces upon the erring people.

Hosea was a Northerner, but there is no evidence as to the actual place of his birth. He was the son of Beeri and prophesied in the Kingdom of the ten tribes. His prophetic activities fall within the lifetime of Isaiah.¹

When Hosea was called to be a prophet, the Kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel had been elevated to a

1. Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B.Eirdman Publishing Company, 1949) p. 244.

position of great earthly power by Jeroboam II. This revival of the might and greatness of Israel was only the last display of divine grace, through which the Lord sought to bring back His people from their evil ways and lead them to repentance.² When the great age of Jeroboam was over, Israelite prosperity began to fade rapidly. Jeroboam's son, Zechariah, was assassinated by Shallum, then Shallum by Menahem. This king won a temporary security by submission to Tiglath-pileser in 738 BC., but his son, Pekahiah, was murdered by Pekah in the interest of the anti-Assyrian party. Pekah perished in a vain attempt to stem the tide of Assyrian provinces. His successor, Hoshea, revolted after a nine year reign and was put to death by Shalmaneser V, who succeeded Tiglath-pileser in 727 BC. Samaria was then besieged, and fell to Sargon II after a three-years' resistance (721 BC.), and the Kingdom of Israel came to an end.³

The worship of the period had become very degraded. When the Kingdom had split, Jeroboan, the son

2. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical commentary on the Old Testament, The Twelve Minor Prophets (London: T. and T. Clark, 1900), pp.17-18.

3. W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p., 345.

of Nebat, had placed two golden calves in the northern Kingdom as representatives of Jehovah. He banished the Levite from the Kingdom (those who opposed him) for he had broken the basic covenant relationship with God by his act. Thus the worship of the people became a political institution, in direct opposition to the Kingdom of God; and the sanctuary of Jehovah was changed into a king's sanctuary.

The consequence of the image worship had a telling effect on the relationship of the people to God. Because of the presence of the images, Jehovah was placed as an equal with the gods and idols, being worshipped by the pagans about Israel. So finally the worship of Jehovah was just a form no different than that of the other gods.⁴

It was during such times as these that Hosea was sent to prophecy. In the ministry of Hosea to the ten apostate northern tribes, there is manifest the grace of God. It is to these tribes, ripe for destruction, that the prophet was sent. His great purpose was to reveal the love of God for a sinful and rebellious

4. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

nation. He pictured that nation under the symbolism of a faithless wife, as a nation that has committed spiritual adultery, and he pleaded with the people to repent and to turn from their ungodly ways. There must come a time of refining, when Israel would dwell for many days in an unusual condition. Then, after the exile, mercy would again be shown.⁵

The man. Little is said of the character of Hosea in his prophecy. Perhaps the only insight into this man's character which can be gained is through a study of his domestic life. The first three chapters of the book deal with a mixture of verses referring to the relationships of Hosea with his wife and God with Israel. There are certain characteristics here worth mentioning.

First, he was a man completely dedicated to carrying out the will of God for his life. When the Lord commanded him to take Gomer for his wife, he obeyed. He was ready at God's command.

Second, he was a man capable of a love which

5. Young, loc. cit.

which could not be shaken by unfaithfulness. When Gomer, his wife, proved untrue, his love for her did not die and it grieved him because of her absence. As recorded in the third chapter, he went to the very extreme of buying Gomer back again for himself, even after her unfaithfulness.

There are those who explain Hosea's character in a much different light. Cesterly and Robinson⁶ hold that Hosea suffered from a sex-obsession, which drove him to do the very thing of which he had the greatest horror. This was their way of explaining his marriage and faithfulness to a known prostitute;

Modern psychological science has helped us to see that we have in prophecy the emergence of elements from the sub-conscious, facilitated--indeed made possible by the peculiar psychic state which made the prophet what he was. In other words, what the prophet said and did was the expression of that real basic personality of which he himself was often unaware. Like many another great soul in the history of man's religion (we may, not unfairly, cite Tertullian and Augustine as examples), Hosea was, at any rate in his youth, subject to what recent psychology would call a "sex-complex." Such natures as his have a peculiar intensity and passion which run through all their

6, Cesterley and Robinson, op. cit., pp. 351-352.

life, and often, when duly "sublimated" give them an extraordinary power and impressiveness. In Hosea we have the struggle between the subconscious obsession and the purity of conscious thought resulting in his involving himself in the thing he most hated. Seen from another point of view (that which the prophet himself may have more nearly realized) he seems to have felt that the supreme act of surrender to the will of God was to take the step most horrible to him, and to bind his life to that of a woman belonging to the class he most loathed. More simple still, he found himself swept away by an overwhelming love for a woman who belonged to a class against which his better nature revolted, and, in his love, he found a reflection of that which Yahweh bore to Israel, faithless and disgusting as she was. It was an awful thing to Hosea that he should so love Gomer, but Yahweh was immeasurably nobler and purer than he, and Israel stood on a lower moral level than the erring woman to whom he gave himself. So, in the agony of his own spirit, and in the deathless love he knew, he found an image of the heart of God, broken by the constant rejection of His love, and by the endlessly repeated apostasies of His beloved People.⁷

Perhaps after the word study it will be easier to see that a more conservative view (as the first stated) is the acceptable conclusion.

Hosea's great contribution to Hebrew religion is the idea of 'steadfast love,' which is God's persistent love for the people whom He chose and with whom He made the covenant. It is this steadfast love

7. Ibid.

which also formed the bases of the Christian concept of grace.⁸

Hosea is the St. John of the Old Testament championing religion at its roots and in its essence. His work emphasized the love of God. There is something of the mystic in Hosea; in all experience he found something typical. The character of the patriarch Jacob was an adumbration of that of his descendants (Hosea XII), and his own love for his unfaithful wife is a shadow of Jehovah's love for Israel (Hosea I-III).

The message and authorship. The major emphasis within the message was the announcement of coming ruin. As over against this mission is Hosea's announcement of God's undying love and how it had been set at naught by wayward Israel. This message came at a time when Israel was having her last period of glory and the downfall which followed immediately. The book does not seem to give any exhortations for the people to repent to prevent this oncoming ruin, but to those who return to God, the book gives the message of hope which will

8. Norman H. Snaith, Amos, Hosea and Micah, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries, (London: The Epworth Press, 1956), p. 52.

follow the ruin.

The authorship of certain passages within the book are widely held to be later additions even among conservative scholars. Adam Clarke holds that the text has been corrupted:

Hosea is concise, sententious, and abrupt. It is his manner to omit the connexive and adversative particles; an observation which we should recollect when we observe them occasionally supplied by versions or manuscripts. These are among the causes of that obscurity for which he is remarkable; but the greatest difficulties arise from the corrupt readings which deform the printed text. He chiefly addresses Israel; but introduces frequent mention of Judah. He not only inveighs against the vices of the people but sharply arraigns the conduct of their Kings, Princes, and Priests.⁹

Another scholar, Norman Snaith has stated:

Most of the book is from the prophet Hosea, though there are sections here and there which seem to be from later times. The text of the Hebrew is often corrupt, and there are some instances where it is quite impossible to say what is really meant. This is probably the only Northern collection of oracles, and it is only by a miracle that it has survived.¹⁰

Other scholars of a more liberal view point maintain that the text was extended or expanded by

9. Adam Clarke, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, V4 (New York: Carlton and Porter), p. 621.
 10. Norman H. Snaith, loc. cit.

later scribes, thus attempting to find a better basis of continuity. They employ the following criteria: (a) passages which offer hope for the future are contrary to Hosea's message of doom, (b) a compiler always tried to find a passage of hope to place at the end of Hosea's work, (c) there are words and phrases which do not occur elsewhere in pre-exilic literature.

Some of these reasons listed seem quite clear when studied in the light of the overall trend in the Scriptures. In (a) above, it seems that chapter three is completely rejected or forgotten by the critics. As for (b), this statement is true of all the prophecies of punishment. God always leaves a note of hope for the people. Perhaps (C) would hold up if there is sufficient literature in existence to verify such a statement, which is doubtful.

11. Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 350.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY UNITS AND STYLE IN HOSEA

There is much controversy concerning the literary units and style of the prophet's writings. Scarcely can two expositors be found who will agree as to the exact beginning and ending of the units or how each can be classified. Most of the writers of commentaries and Old Testament introductions agree that there is to be found the narrative and the oracle. The discourse plays a prominent part in many interpretations.

Four major literary units, the oracle, the prayer, the sermon, and the narrative have been used to classify the material of the Book for this study. Of course in these larger groupings, other smaller units may appear.

The characteristics of the oracle as used in Hosea are (a) a command for action from God to the prophet, sometimes used in the second person and some-

TABLE I
THE LITURGICAL UNITS IN MOSEA

Reference	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
1:1				x
1:2-1:3	x			
1:4-1:5	x			
1:6-1:7	x			
1:8-1:11	x			
2:1-2:23			x	
3:1	x			
3:2-3:5				x
4:1-4:10			x	
5:1-5:15			x	
6:1-6:3		x		
6:4-8:14			x	
9:1-14:1			x	
14:26-14:3		x		
14:4-14:9	x			

times in the third person, (b) the above (a) is implied as in 14:4-9, (c) the reality that God is speaking to the prophet with a command. Most of the oracles are found in the first chapter of the Book with one appearing in 3:1 and one in 14:4-9.

There are only two prayers found in the Book of Hosea and each are attempts by the prophet to lead the people in these prayers. He appears to be pleading with the people to return to God through this medium of prayer. The first prayer is followed by pleading for the people, whereas the second is followed by the promises of God for redemption and blessing.

The major portion of the prophecy is given in sermons. These are directed to specific groups such as Israel, Ephraim, Judah, the priest. Some are addressed in the vocative, others are not. For the most part, these sermons are warnings of the coming punishment but these are not without hope. These sermons speak of the future hope to those who return to the true worship of God.

The narrative of the Book comprises very little material. From two short sections a background is given

of the personal life of the prophet. Here is found the springboard for the interpretation of this prophets writings.

The style of writing has led many to believe that there have been numerous additions to the prophecy and also that the material which is original has been reshuffled so as to obliterate the prophets true character and message.

With the exception of the first and third chapters, which are in prosaic form, the book tends to be rhythmical, and abounds in highly figurative and metaphorical language. The diction is exceedingly concise and laconic. The sentences are usually brief showing little or no connection. An unexpected change of person occurs frequently; number and gender are often neglected. Hosea is more scanty in his use of particles than the other prophets, which adds not a little to the difficulty of interpreting his prophecies. In many instances he is highly animated, energetic, and sublime. Of all the prophets he is, in point of language, the most obscure and hard to be understood.¹²

12. Ebenezer Henderson, The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Company, 1868), p.1.

Gray has disagreed with the above as he has stated:

The language of Hosea is to us peculiarly different. His style is concise and abrupt, abounding with figuratives and metaphors, which are often intermixed; and the transition from one subject and figurative to another are frequent and sudden. The particular occasions on which his prophecies were delivered are in themselves rarely obvious, and are never specified by the author. Some parts of them, however, are peculiarly pathetic, animated, and sublime.¹³

Perhaps Cheyne finds an acceptable theory for the irregularities. He has stated:

"It was not so much the mere chill of neglect (rejection by people) as the emotional distress caused by his message of woe that choked his utterance and brought confusion into his style".¹⁴

The classification of literary units which is used in this study is not the result of extensive study but is an attempt to make use of a simple classification to aid in the word study. Perhaps many would disagree with this classification because of the various units within each of those listed but this study is not concerned primarily with a discussion on literary units but the words found in those units.

13. James C. Gray, The Biblical Museum, OT Vol. 10 The Book of Hosea, (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Company), p. 78.

14. T. K. Cheyne, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, The Book of Hosea, (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), p. 33.

CHAPTER III

HOSEA'S INTERPRETATION OF ISRAEL'S COVENANT HISTORY

To Hosea, Israel held a very honored position because of her special relationship with Jehovah. This relationship had a long history as the allusions would indicate within the book of Hosea. Perhaps reviewing this historical status would better prepare one for the study into the emotional characteristics which are to be touched upon in later sections.

The word used for covenant כָּוֶן is a derivative of כָּתַב which means to cut as into stone where the commandments were cut. This could also signify the steadfast binding which the covenant would have as assurance. The word also implies more than one is involved for one person cannot make a covenant. There must be at least two parties; The Scriptures list two types (a) Covenants between men and (b) those in which

TABLE I I
WORDS OF EMOTION REFERRING TO HISTORY

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
אֶהְבֶּה	love			9:10	
אֶחָד	strength			12:3	
אֶחָד	brother			12:3	
אֶחָד	mother			10:14	
אֶחָד	wife			12:12	
אֶחָד	womb			12:33	
אֶחָד	weep			12:4	
אֶחָד	flee			12:12	
אֶחָד	covenant			6:7	
אֶחָד				8:1	
אֶחָד				10:4	
אֶחָד				12:1	
אֶחָד				12:4	
אֶחָד	1:4			3:5	
אֶחָד	know			12:4	
אֶחָד	be able			12:14	
אֶחָד	provoke to anger			7:16	
אֶחָד	derision			12:4	
אֶחָד	angel			12:4	
אֶחָד	find			12:8	
אֶחָד	serve			12:12	
אֶחָד	go up			12:13	
אֶחָד	follow at the heel			10:9	
אֶחָד	bury			12:3	
אֶחָד	evil			9:6	
אֶחָד	to appoint prince			7:2	
אֶחָד	persevere			12:4	
אֶחָד	ruin			10:14	
אֶחָד	keep			12:12	
אֶחָד				12:13	

God condescended to be a covenanting party.¹⁵

An insight into modern interpretation of covenant forms is discussed by Mendenhall:

It is well known that Biblical tradition preserves for us a number of references to covenants of different sorts. There are only two traditions, however, which fall into the form described above. The first is the Decalogue, and the second is included in the narrative of Joshua 24. The covenant with Abraham (and Noah) is of completely different form. Both in the narrative of Genesis 15 and 17, and in the later references to this covenant, it is clearly stated or implied that it is Yahweh Himself who swears to certain promises to be carried out in the future. It is not often enough seen that no obligations were imposed upon Abraham. Circumcision was not originally an obligation, but a sign of the covenant, like the rainbow in Genesis 9. It serves to identify the recipient (s) of the covenant, as well as to give a concrete indication that a covenant exists. It is for the protection of the promise, perhaps like the mark on Cain of Genesis 4.

The covenant of Moses, on the other hand is almost the exact opposite. It imposes specific obligations upon the tribes and clans without binding Yahweh to specific obligations, though it goes without saying that the covenant relationship itself presupposes the protection and support of Yahweh to Israel.¹⁶

Hosea seemed to hold that the covenant relationship between God and man existed from the very creation:

15. Davis and Gehman, The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press) pp.118-119.

16. George E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), pp.35-36.

But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant; they have dealt treacherously against me. (Hosea 6-7).

Of course the word אָדָם which is translated Adam is a controversial issue for it could also be translated a man.

There is no doubt but that Hosea was well versed in Hebrew history and the covenant history was very real to him. To him it is doubtful that any of these covenants made between God and man in earlier days were mere one sided affairs but binding upon both God and man.

The next covenant that Hosea dealt with was the covenant relationship between God and Jacob. (Hosea 12). This reference does not deal with the exact demands of a covenant but of the power Jacob had with God. Abraham is not mentioned nor is Noah mentioned so that the first covenants did not concern the prophet. He was mainly concerned with the covenants which Jacob and Moses made for the people with God. These covenants were the ones which were binding upon the people.

Hosea was aware that neither of the covenants were honored by the people for very long at a time. Even while the law was being given and just prior to the making of the covenant, the children of Israel were molding and

worshipping a golden calf image. Soon they made their promise with God but did not keep their oath very long. There were times of rebellion even before they reached the promised land.

The covenant relationship rested upon the righteousness of the people as they obeyed the ten commandments and various other laws. Early in their history within Canaan, they left these laws and as the book of Judges continuously states; "...each man did that which seemed right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6)

A study of the words which Hosea used to describe how Israel had treated the covenant from times past until his day are instructive.

Hosea's first reference is to Adam and how he turned to the way of the flesh. In 6 : 7 he declared that Israel, like Adam, had $\sim \overline{\text{q}} \nearrow$ (transgressed) the covenant in a sense of having passed over the covenant to something else. From this root also springs the idea of anger, pride or haughtiness which might better explain how they treated the covenant. Because of this passing over or transgression, Jehovah declared that they had dealt $\sim \overline{\text{q}} \overline{\text{q}}$ (treacherously) which has the

sense of faithlessness or the attempt to hide something under a cover or wrapper. This was what the people of Hosea's day was attempting to do. They were outwardly worshipping Jehovah but inwardly were going the way of the Canaanites 6:6 and 8:10.

Again Hosea compared the corruption of the people to that of the children of Benjamin when they committed the unspeakable sin in Gibeah. They had taken the Levites concubine and shamefully abused her until she died. (Judges 19). Israel now was committing spiritual adultery by breaking the covenant with God and thereby caused themselves to be corrupted 9:7-9.

Hosea also saw a comparison between the condition of the people in his day and that which is recorded in Numbers 25:1-3. He stated that the fathers of Israel came to Baal-peor and קָדְשׁוֹ (consecrated) themselves, (which has the meaning of withdrawing from any other allegiance) unto that shameful thing (a more literal translation would be shame) and became as זָכָר (abominable) as that which they worshipped and thereby became so polluted that the covenant with God was of no effect. (Hosea 9:10).

As he called to remembrance these scenes from Israel's history, he did not let them by without also recalling the punishment which came with breaking the covenant. He stated:

Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be destroyed as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was וַיִּשָּׁח (dashed into pieces) with her children (Hosea 10:14).

In viewing Israel's covenant history, Hosea was aware of the fact that with this covenant Israel had a unique name for God. There were those who could call their gods by such names as יְיָ (lord), אֲדֹנָי (husband or master), אֱלֹהִים (god), אֱלֹהִיִּם (gods), יְהוָה (lord), but none other than the Israelites worshipped יְהוָה (Yahweh or Jehovah in the A.V.). The word is a derivative of הָיָה which translates to exist or to be. It is the most sacred name for God, expressive of His eternal, Self-existence. The origin for this name for God is found in Exodus 3:14, connected with the incident in which Moses was chosen to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt. In Exodus 4:3-4 God uses the word in connection with the covenant which He had made

TABLE IV

THE NAMES USED TO DESIGNATE GOD

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
יְיָ יְיָ יְיָ יְיָ	lord husband			12:14 2:16 11:9 11:9 11:12 4:1 4:6 4:12 5:4 6:6 7:10 8:2 8:6 9:1 9:8 9:17 12:3 12:5 12:6 12:9 13:4 13:16 14:1 2:13 2:16 2:20 2:21 4:1 4:10 4:15 4:16 5:4 5:6 5:7	3:5
יְיָ יְיָ יְיָ יְיָ	God God	1:10 1:7			
יְיָ יְיָ יְיָ יְיָ	God	1:2 1:4 1:7 3:1 14:9	6:1 6:3 14:2		1:1 3:5

TABLE V

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
<p>17. E. Davidson, <i>The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicons</i> (London: J. Hatch & Sons, 1862), p. 171.</p> <p> 7:10 8:1 8:13 9:3 9:4 9:5 9:14 10:3 10:12 11:10 11:11 12:2 12:5 12:9 12:13 13:4 13:15 14:1 8:14 11:9 </p>	<p>Maker Holy One</p>				<p>The Jews who (from an early date) believed this was incommunicable, spiritualized, in the pronunciation the consonants of <i>Y</i> (Yod), the vowels being alike in both words (with the exception of single and composite vowels), and according to these the phoneticists united the vowels of the prefixes when coming to stand before <i>Y</i>.</p> <p>Yod had the distinction of being regarded as the initial of <i>Yod</i> and perhaps this is not only so.</p> <p>The system of relationship, illustrative of the relation between God and man, is the predominant theme here was attempting to get across to the people.</p> <p>In the first three chapters he uses his marriage with Israel as an example of that covenant relationship. At the 14 chapters to discuss who is being referred to in this section.</p> <p>Davidson's own linguistic experience taught him what covenant love <i>Y</i> could mean to Jehovah. Because of his own attitude to his wayward wife, he came to know that the <i>Y</i> of God meant God's steadfast determination to be true to his share of the covenant obligation which Israel and on her part. David's love for God's faith-Jehovah was so strong and sure that he could not but administer could kill it. He realized that Jehovah's love for</p>

with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Jews who (from an early date) believed this name incommunicable, substituted, in the pronunciation, the consonants of יהוה (lord), the vowels being alike in both words (with the exception of simple and composite Sheva), and according to these the punctuations suited the vowels of the prefixes when coming to stand before יהוה .

Jehovah had the distinction of being regarded as the National God of Israel and perhaps this is not only so with the pagan tribes but also with Israel.

The husband-wife relationship, illustrative of the covenant between God and man, is the predominant message Hosea was attempting to get across to the people. In the first three chapters he uses his marriage with Gomer as an example of that covenant relationship. At times it is impossible to discern who is being referred to in this section.

Hosea's own domestic experience taught him what covenant love אהבה could mean to Jehovah. Because of his own attitude to his wayward wife, he came to know that the אהבה of God meant God's steadfast determination to be true to His share of the covenant obligation whatever Israel did on her part. Hosea's love for Gomer-bath-Diblaim was so strong and sure that not all her adultries could kill it. He realized that Jehovah's love for

17. B. Davidson, The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (London: W. Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited), p., 171.

Israel was at least as sure and strong as his own love for his wife. Jehovah's love was both a 'sure love' and a 'love unswerving.'¹⁸

To Hosea, the time when Jehovah brought Israel-Ephraim out of Egypt was the time of espousals and youthful love. The trouble began in Canaan, when the new wife Israel was enticed away from her true husband by the lovers, the Baals. She played the harlot with them.

But through all the troubles which beat against and broke the marriage covenant between Jehovah and Israel, there was one factor which never changed. This was God's sure love for Israel. It takes two to make a covenant and it also takes two to break it. Israel may have rejected God, but God has not rejected Israel.¹⁹

There is a father-son, relationship also seen by Hosea in Israel's covenant history. In 11:1 the Lord spoke of Israel as a child, a son being called out of Egypt, this signifying that it was early in the history of Israel when God made His covenant with them. In the reference to Israel as "my son", there is also the element of filial piety known so well in oriental lands, which placed Israel in a place of obligation to obey Jehovah. This was ignored by Israel in breaking the covenant and Israel went from the prophets to sacrifice to the Baalim and burn incense to graven images (11:2).

¹⁸. Norman H. Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London, E.C.1: The Epworth Press, 1944), p. 111.

¹⁹. Ibid., 112.

Nevertheless the Lord continued to show love to them. He took upon Himself the task of a parent in teaching Ephraim to walk and supplying his daily need. (11:3-4). Even when in utter rejection by the child the parent continued to love the child and supply his needs, thus God's father-son relationship with Israel.²⁰

In all the analogies Hosea used to depict the history of covenant in Israel's history, there was a common proclamation; Israel was untrue, God was true. Israel deserved the punishment which Hosea predicted would come and which actually came to pass.

20. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, The Twelve Minor Prophets (London: T. and F. Clark, 1900), p. 138.

CHAPTER IV

SIGNIFICENCE OF EMOTION EXPRESSED BY GOD

In the book of Hosea there is a strange mixture of emotion in God seemingly the exact opposite of one another, as He dealt with the prevailing conditions at hand. The emotion which has the greatest number of references is that of love, compassion and mercy. The next in line of usage is the anger or displeasure that God had towards the conditions into which the people have fallen. (See Table III).

The definitions of the Hebrew words used in these tables are based upon the Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,²¹ the Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon,²² and a Lexicon Veteris Testamenti Libros.²³

21. F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, loc. cit.

22. B. Davidson, loc. cit.

23. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, A Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros.

TABLE III
WORDS DENOTING EMOTION IN GOD

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
אֱהֵב - אֲהַבְתֶּם אֲהַבְתֶּם	love love	14:4 3:1		11:1 9:15 11:4 2:19 6:4 6:6 11:8 2:19 2:1	
רַחֵם	loving-kindness				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	compassion				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	mercy (love)	1:6 1:7 1:8	14:3		
אֲהַבְתֶּם	faithfulness			2:20 10:11 13:9 2:19 10:12 8:6 11:9 13:11 8:5 11:10 5:10 11:10	3:5
אֲהַבְתֶּם	goodness				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	help				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	righteousness				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	anger	14:4			
אֲהַבְתֶּם	anger				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	to burn -				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	fury				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	demand, require, roar				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	desire				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	grow warm				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	heart				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	holy				
אֲהַבְתֶּם	hate				

The root form of the word will be used in these tables or the simplest nominal form will be listed when verbal cognates are not used. In defining Hebrew terms, the form appearing on the table will be given and will be followed by the common English translation of that term as is used mainly in the American Standard version of Hosea. The English translation will be enclosed in parentheses.

אָהַב-אָהַבָּ (love) is a type of love covering a wide variety of situations. There is human love to a human object, love of appetite, love to God, to friend, and of divine love to (a) individual men and (b) to the people, Israel.

אַהֲבָה (love) is used in Hosea only to express love in God for his people but it can also be used to express human love between man and man or woman.

רַחֲמִים (lovingkindness) is generally not classified as human love, but the love of superiors to inferiors, and to those who need help or compassionate love. This is also known as covenant love since it can be found only where there is a contractual

relationship, where two parties are bound together by obligations which must be honored with steadfast zeal and patience. Whereas Amos spoke of the people's sinfulness in terms of failure to fulfill God's demands for righteousness, Hosea spoke of it in terms of the breaking of a band or covenant. For him the fundamental fact was that Israel was bound to God by קֶרֶן covenant love.²⁴

קֶרֶן (kindled) is the growing warmth of compassion within God. It also reaches the intensity in a great heat. Light upon the meaning of the root is obtained from the modern Syriac, kemr, fermentation.²⁵

קֶרֶן (compassion) is used with the previous word (קֶרֶן) to denote sorrow, being moved to pity, comfort, to be relieved. This word occurs elsewhere (Isaiah 57:18 and Zechariah 1:3) only in the sense of comfort.²⁶

קֶרֶן (mercy, love) usually denotes only God's love, mercy or compassion. In Hosea the word is used

24. John Marchline, The Interpreters Bible. The Book of Hosea (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press), pp. 556-557.

25. William Rainey Harper, Amos and Hosea, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 369.

26. Ibid.

six times to refer to God and once to refer to Hosea.

רַחֲמִים (compassion) is a plural of the previous word which speaks of compassion or mercies in the way of a brotherly feeling or brotherhood.

These words describe the actual feeling which God displayed towards his people because they were in a covenant relationship with Him even though they, seemingly, had long forgotten it. Because of their forgetfulness, there are words of emotion referring to God which are the opposites of those in the above list and reveal the nature of God in a different light. These are the words denoting anger or rage toward the actions of the people.

אֵץ (anger) is a derivative of אָץ. It is a graphic term based on the physical expression of snorting through the nose when angry.²⁷

אֵץ אֵץ (kindled-of anger) is usually used with אֵץ or with anger as understood even though the word is omitted.

אֵץ אֵץ (burning of anger) is the masculine noun

27. Herbert Livingstone, Hebrew Prophet Consciousness (Wilmore, Ky.: Unpublished doctoral dissertation submitted to Drew University, 1955) pp., 147-148.

of the previous verb נָּזַח . This is the most common word for God's anger in Hosea.

נָּזַח (wrath), a derivative of נָּזַח , usually means in the verbal form, "to pass over," to pass away, or to consume, but the feminine noun refers to an excess of fury.²⁸

נָּזַח (roar), a verb, refers to the roaring of God in the likeness of a lion. This word also carries the force of "demand" or "require".

There are other words expressing emotion which do not appear as often as words as love and anger, yet these words express much concerning the Person of God.

נָּזַח (faithfulness), a feminine noun, is translated literally as "firmness" or "steadiness." This signifies the firmness or steadfastness of the betrothal of Israel to God.

נָּזַח (fairness, beauty), masculine noun, also denotes goodness, wealth prosperity, happiness, and cheerfulness.

נָּזַח (help), masculine noun, which in the construct

28. Ibid.

state is equal to "one who helps." $\overline{P} \overline{7} \overline{5}$ (righteousness). Keil understands this to mean justice towards fellow men. Actually this "righteousness" is to be taught by God to the people. $\overline{5} \overline{2} \overline{7}$ (desire) which denotes "take pleasure in," "delight in," in the sense which God desires.

$\overline{2} \overline{2}$ (heart), masculine noun, in the physical sense. Also it is frequently used for "life" or "the vital principle." To the $\overline{2} \overline{2}$ is ascribed "thought," "reasoning," "understanding," "will, judgment, design, affection, love, hatred, courage, fear, joy, and sorrow." Sometimes it is used to refer to the "middle" or "inner part."

$\overline{\psi} \overline{7} \overline{7}$ (holy), an adjective, used to make up a descriptive name for God. It denotes: "holy" of God, "set apart", "sacred", "holy" to God.

$\overline{\chi} \overline{7} \overline{\psi}$ (hate), verb, perhaps here better translated as "learned to hate" because it occurs in a reference to history.

There must be a reason for the appearance of the words listed above in the book of Hosea. As God was speaking through Hosea to his people there came to the

forefront the covenant relationship and the distance which had come to separate the people from God because of their rejection of Him. Because of this the wrath and anger of God is revealed, but not without hope for Hosea continually gave a note of encouragement throughout this prophecy.

Even before treating the words which refer to the emotional nature of the people, perhaps some attention can be given to the obstacles they placed before the love and compassion of God. By their actions they forced a change of emotion in God from compassion to wrath.

It was not the desire of God to visit His people with judgment as can be seen in this passage:

How shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zehoium? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath. (Hosea 11:8-9).

Here God plainly states that wrath is not His desire but lovingkindness (רַחֲמִים) is His true quality of His relationship with His people.

One of the major obstacles which the people had placed before God's love is found in the term already considered but needing further study. This term is

אֱהָבָה or covenant love. Since this love must be in operation by both parties it was an easy matter for the people to break that band, making it of no effect.

Hosea's charges are quite general. He does not single out any particular section of the community. His complaint is that there is no trustworthiness anywhere: there is no אֱמֶת (truth), nor אֱהָבָה (covenant love), nor knowledge of God in the land. 4:1. In Hosea 4:2, Hosea follows his general statement of Jehovah's controversy with the inhabitants of Israel by proceeding to define it as a charge of 'swearing (to keep covenants) and breaking faith'.²⁹

There can be seen here the position into which this placed God. The breaking of faith was completely on the part of the people.

The people go far in their lack of trustworthiness for in respect to worship there is a double charge.

First, there is the same contrast between ritual worship and social conduct; 'for I desire אֱהָבָה (lovingkindness) and not אֵלֹהִים (sacrifice) and אֱמֶת (knowledge) of God more than אֵלֹהִים (burnt offering) 6:6. 'Ephraim has multiplied altars..... to sin', 8:11.³⁰

29. Snaith, op. cit., p. 56.

30. Ibid.

Against God's righteousness the people sinned. This was rebellion for sin is rebellion against God.

Hosea said that the people have "sinned against" God, 4:7, that 'they have left off to take heed to Jehovah', 4:10, and that 'Israel hath behaved himself ^{וְיָצַח} (stubbornly or rebelliously) as a rebellious heifer', 4:16. Israel's attitude was one of wandering away from God, and of rebelling against Him, 7:13.³¹ This rebellion is also seen in 5:5 where the ^{גִּיּוּרָא} (pride) of Israel is spoken of.

It can easily be seen how a dilemma is created. What course of action can be taken by God? He has not broken faith and does not desire to do so but has been forced into action by this rebellion of the people. The covenant was not effective in keeping the people. They, as the wife of Jehovah, proved unfaithful having loved false gods above their Husband.

The prophet shows how the children of Israel have acted in much the same way that an unfaithful wife would act toward her husband. They have actually been drawn

31. Ibid., pp. 62-63.

away by lusting after the false gods of the people around about them. (This marriage-covenant has been dealt with elsewhere in this study more extensively.)

Much of the response of the people to Divine appeal will be treated later but it is necessary to note that the emotion as expressed by God in changing from compassion to anger, from love to wrath is brought about by this response. The righteousness of God must be satisfied, therefore punishment must be the reward for sin.

CHAPTER V

THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE TO DIVINE APPEAL

The social and spiritual condition of Israel as Hosea began his prophecy was the climax of a development through several generations. At the time when the Kingdom was divided there was drafted the blueprint for such apostasy. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had secured the assurance of a division which would not be brought back together by instituting calf-worship and relieving the people of dependence upon Jerusalem as the only place to worship.

At first, as has been previously stated, the calves were representatives of Jehovah, supposedly. Soon, because of the similiarity existing between calf-worship and the worship of the fertility cult of the Canaanite, there became an inter-mingling of practices and although the Israelites claimed Jehovah as their

God, inwardly and outwardly the pagan gods had won them. Hosea brought God's message of pending doom because of the idolatrous practices prevalent and because the people rejected their recall by God.

God's view of the condition of the people.

Because of Israel's special favored position with God, there are many references which dealt with that nation as the bride or wife of God. For this reason the terminology consists of words which would bear meaning in a marital relationship. A major complaint against the people was that they had committed spiritual adultery and the results should be severe for such wickedness but God, as the Husband against whom such unfaithfulness has been wrought, continued to love and forgive even though this sin and unholiness was continually before him. (See Table V).

$\int \int \int$ (commit fornication), a verb, has both a secular and spiritual meaning. As far as man's society is concerned, to commit whoredom or fornication, to play the harlot would be sufficient. The meaning would have a somewhat different meaning when referring to those

TABLE V

WORDS DENOTING EMOTION IN THE PEOPLE

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	mourn love	3:1		10:5 4:18 9:1	
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	lovers foolish iniquity			12:7 8:9 9:7 6:8 9:4 12:11 6:5 4:3 11:12 4:1 7:6 4:15 5:15 10:2 13:1 13:16 5:7 6:7 4:19 10:6 13:15 10:13 2:18 7:4 7:6 10:1 2:7 10:6 5:5 7:10 10:13 6:9 7:1	
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	light languish confirmed truth lie in wait offence				
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	treacherous				
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	ashamed				
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	trust security burn				
לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים לָאֵלֹהִים	empty seek shame pride mighty robbers				3:5

TABLE V

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
וָיָרָא	quarrel			10:5	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	rejoice			7:14	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	rejoicing			10:5	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	discover			9:1	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	steal			7:6	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	thief			10:5	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	blood guilt			4:2	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	destroy			7:1	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				12:14	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				4:6	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				10:7	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				10:15	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	knowledge (lack of)			4:6	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	wickedness			6:9	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	commit-	1:2		4:12	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	fornication			4:13	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				4:14	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				4:15	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				9:1	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				4:10	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				4:18	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				5:3	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	fornication			4:12	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	fornication			5:4	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	indignation			4:11	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	cord, pain			6:10	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	sin			7:16	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				13:13	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				4:7	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				8:11	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				10:9	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ				13:2	
וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	sin			12:8	

TABLE V

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
אָן אַ גוֹט	sin			4:8 8:13 9:9 10:8 13:12 7:5 5:13 8:10 13:15 7:5 7:7 4:1 10:12 12:6 8:8 11:10 11:11 5:11 7:14 10:3 4:7 9:11 10:5 7:6 7:5 13:16 11:12 12:7 9:7 9:8 11:8 4:2 4:13 4:14 7:4	
אָן אַ גוֹט	sick				
אָן אַ גוֹט	sickness				
אָן אַ גוֹט	sorrow				
אָן אַ גוֹט	desire				
אָן אַ גוֹט	heat				
אָן אַ גוֹט	hot				
אָן אַ גוֹט	lovingkindness				
אָן אַ גוֹט	pleasure				
אָן אַ גוֹט	tremble				
אָן אַ גוֹט	willing				
אָן אַ גוֹט	howl				
אָן אַ גוֹט	fear				
אָן אַ גוֹט	glory (change)				
אָן אַ גוֹט	flame				
אָן אַ גוֹט	scorn				
אָן אַ גוֹט	contentious				
אָן אַ גוֹט	deceit				
אָן אַ גוֹט	hatred				
אָן אַ גוֹט	apostacy	14:4			
אָן אַ גוֹט	commit adultery				

TABLE V

Hebrew	English	Oracle	Prayer	Sermon	Narrative
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	wickedness trembling satisfied			10:13 13:1 4:10	
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	revolters rejoice be mad			13:6 5:2 9:1	
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	be mad destruction (ruin)			7:3 9:7 7:13	
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	vanity			9:6 12:1 10:4	
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	retribution forget			12:1 9:7 4:6	
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	be at peace spoil deception		14:2	13:6 13:15 7:1	
וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם וְיָשָׁם	bitterness			12:14	

matters pertaining to the spiritual. This would be considered as improper intercourse with foreign nations or deities. The first instance is found in Israel sending to King Jereh (Hosea 5:13) and the second in being joined to idols (Hosea 4:15-18).³² In 4:12 the phrase $\text{לִשְׁׁמֹרֶת אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יֵשׁוּׁרִם}$ signifies "to whore away from God," i.e. so as to withdraw from subjection to God.

זָנָה (fornication), noun, masculine plural abstract intensive, a derivative of זָנָה and has a threefold application which are: sexual, international and spiritual. It actually is the behavior of the זָנָה .

זָנָה (fornication) noun, feminine abstract which also has the threefold application as previously mentioned. This word is used topically only for idolatry.

זָנָה (commit adultery), a verb, which would literally translate: have sexual intercourse with the wife or betrothed of another man. This refers often to the idolatrous worship of Baal.

32. Op. cit. p. 80.

The practices of unfaithfulness between husbands and wives were prevalent among these pagans surrounding the Israelites but Israel was supposed to be a people apart from these unholy practices. Hosea interprets their spiritual condition and perhaps even their social ethical position in the light of standards of the Canaanites. Actually the vows which the fathers of Israel had made with God were honored no more than the marriage vows to a harlot. With utter disregard for the love which God had shown towards them, the people continued to lust after other gods; the follies of their neighbors.

The words used to denote rebellion of the people, which show the ways of sinning, are many. Varied are their degrees of evil.

𐤇𐤍𐤁 (iniquity) has the idea of trouble, sorrow or wickedness. Koehler and Baumgartner hold that the word deals with evil power or magic i.e. magic power.³³ The reference in Hosea (6:8) would mean that the dwellers of Gilead were those who had magic and wicked powers in their idolatrous worship.

33. Koehler and Baumgartner, loc. cit.

$\pi \text{ } \not\subset \text{ } \pi$ (lewdness, wickedness) is device,
 plan or purpose for evil. This type of wickedness or
 sin especially refers to unchastity. The priests, which
 should be leading the people to God, were accused of
 this condition by Hosea in 6:9. Perhaps this unchastity
 was connected with the fertility cult into which the
 priest's were guilty of leading the people of Israel.
 In the same verse the priests were also accused of
 being a band of $\pi \text{ } \not\subset \text{ } \pi$ (robbers), a predatory band
 who murder and rob the travelers on their way to Shechem.
 This city was one of the cities of Refuge.³⁴

$\pi \text{ } \not\subset \text{ } \pi$ (sin) deals with sin as missing the
 goal or mark. Hosea also accused the priests of this
 sin for they had caused the people to miss the goal. 4:6-8.
 They were supposed to teach the people the law but
 because the people lacked knowledge, the people are
 destroyed. Actually the reproof advances from the sin
 of the whole nation to the sin of the priesthood.³⁵

$\pi \text{ } \not\subset \text{ } \pi$ (sin) would denote a special category
 for sin. Perhaps the translation which states that idols

34. J. P. Lange and Philip Schaff, A Commentary
 on the Holy Scriptures, The Minor Prophets (New York:
 Scribner, Armstrong and Company, 1876) pp. 62-63.

35. Op. cit. p. 78.

were the cause of sin would give more light upon the definition. In 4:8 this would indicate that the priests were living upon the sacrifices which the people made to the idols.³⁶

𐤒 𐤒 𐤓 (transgress) has the idea of breaking boundaries (overflowing natural course) and going into areas which are not for that purpose of righteousness. Hence, Israel had 𐤒 𐤒 𐤓 the covenant and gone out into forbidden areas.

𐤒 𐤒 𐤓 and 𐤒 𐤒 𐤓 (iniquity) has more of a negative view. It is iniquity or wickedness by means of declining or turning aside. This carries an opposite connotation from 𐤒 𐤒 𐤓 which signifies that the people were not only held accountable for actual transgression by rebellion in action but also the rebellion refusing to do that which they should.

𐤓 𐤓 𐤓^{guilt} (guilt) a derivative of 𐤒 𐤒 𐤓, is iniquity, guilt, or punishment of iniquity. This stems from perversity.

𐤓 𐤓 𐤓 (trespassed) has the tone of transgression with rebellion as its background. In 7:13

36. Lange, loc. cit.

the people had revolted from God into their own way which was the idolatrous way.

𐤀𐤁 (wickedness), derivative of 𐤀𐤁𐤁 carries the idea of evil, wicked or worthless. In 7:3 this wickedness was an amusement or delight to the rulers. Those who were supposed to punish sin or wickedness were delighting in it.³⁷ 𐤀𐤁 (evil) denotes a bad quality or wickedness.

𐤀𐤁𐤁 (wickedness) is more of the outward act of sin. It is ungodliness or injustice. In other words in 10:13 the Lord is saying, through Hosea, that the people had willfully acted in rebellion even to a cultivation of wickedness.

In a consideration of this group of words, it is not hard to see the negative response which the people make to the Divine appeal. Sin and iniquity had been developed among the Israelites both outwardly and inwardly, both as an outward act and an inward quality. The priests and kings were in complete agreement in regard to the spiritual trend. No more were offenders of God's covenant rebuked or punished but it was a delight to these leaders of the nation.

37. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 104.

The people rejected God and the prophet continued to warn them and show them the promises and love of God. This was to no avail apparently for the people continued in the way they had chosen and the Kingdom fell. There was no other alternative when this attitude was considered.

The rebellion manifested was more of a spiritual nature than mere outward acts. Perhaps much of their worship was, in appearance, directed towards Jehovah but their hearts were turned into the way of the Canaanites. This was spoken out against in Hosea 6:6.

For I desire goodness and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Various descriptive words were used by Hosea to point out such hypocrisy:

7 2 7 (treacherous) dealt with the Israelites acts of sin in the sense of the attempt to cover or hide. The word translates to act covertly, to deal falsely, treacherously. Lange states of Hosea 5:7:

7 2 7, to act faithlessly, especially of the infidelity of a wife to her husband. The proof (7 5) of such unfaithfulness of Israel to Jehovah, the Husband, is then given. Instead of bearing children to God in Covenant with Him, they had rather, by their illicit intercourse with idols, begotten strange, illegitimate children, children not belonging to the household, i.e.,

children whom the Lord cannot acknowledge as His own.³⁸

ח אף (defile), to be unclean, dealt with pollution in three different fields, each of which Israel was guilty. These were sexual defilement, religious defilement with idols, and ceremonial defilement. In both, Hosea 5:3 and 6:10, Israel was accused of being defiled.

שׁוּב (deceive) is combined with נא (to swear) in Hosea 4:2 and signifies false swearing. This would have dealt, in part at least, with the covenant relationship between the people and Jehovah. שׁוּב (lying) deals with their very nature which came to such degradation that the rulers were delighted to see such evil. נא (deceit) carried the idea also of the act of treachery. This was especially true of speech, i.e., treacherous lips.

שׂוֹנֵא (scoffers) denotes the idea of mocking or deriding as a scorner. The word is used in speaking in obscure or oblique manner. Lange defines scornors or scoffers as:

38. Lange, op. cit., p. 60.

.....men who throw ridicule upon what is sacred,
and what is regarded as sacred. Such derision is
especially natural in a state of intoxication.³⁹

יָדָה (to rebel), also contentious or refractory,
was the accusation placed by Jehovah against Samaria
(Hosea 13:16).

רָבָה (rebellious, stubborn), to be dis-
obedient. Keil and Delitzsch translate Hosea 4:16 to
read:

For Israel has become refractory (רָבָה) like
a refractory (רָבָה) cow: now will Jehovah feed
them like a lamb in a wide field.

רָבָה (unmanageable, refractory), as Israel
would not submit to the yoke of the divine law, it should
have what it desired. God would feed it like a lamb,
which being in a wide field becomes the prey of wolves
and wild beast, i. e. He would give it up to the freedom
of banishment and dispersion among the nations.⁴⁰

שָׁבָה (revolters), are who turns aside, which
signified the rebellion against God. Lange translates
this as apostates.⁴¹

39. Lange, op. cit., p. 68.

40. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 83.

41. Lange, op. cit., p. 59.

נָזַף (apostacy), a returning, defection or rebellious. This could be literally translated in Hosea 11:7 as suspended or apostacy.⁴²

The words dealt with are a few of the many which describe the peoples condition as viewed by God. This nation, Israel, had rebelled; a nation of revolters. The covenant had become of no effect because the people had proved unfaithful, running to other gods.

There are no words of a complimentary nature which refer to Israel except in reference to history or promises for the future. There seemed to be lacking even Elijah's seven thousand (I Kings 19:18) who were not in evidence as spiritual fathers. The accusations of Jehovah were against all, the rulers, the priests, and the people.

Perhaps a factor, which added to this view as taken by Jehovah, was the self-satisfaction or complacency exemplified by the people. They were delighting in the way they were living and showed no signs of desire for a change. A study of this aspect of the people's condition would be profitable.

42. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 140.

The people's view of their own condition. Sin has the ability to blind a person for it would appear that those who are guilty of sin are oftentimes unaware of their condition. The Lord spoke out against such conditions in Matthew 23:1-36 as the Pharisees were accused of blindness.

This was the position of Israel. As they viewed themselves, they were satisfied with that which they found. They could not and would not recognize sin in their midst but rather exalted themselves for their righteousness.

Hosea did not have an extended vocabulary by which he described their self-glorification and satisfaction but the entire book implies that this was their attitude as they rejected God inwardly and only made an outward profession.

גִּיּוֹרָא (pride) has the feeling of majesty or excellence in a sense of exaltation. This could be in the exaltation of either the nation or God. In this case it was their nation they were exalting, recognizing that the nation had a peculiar relationship with God. Even though the covenant relationship was recognized

for the purpose of exalting the nation, yet Israel was not willing to recognize God's authority over their lives.

Another view is that the use of this word in Hosea 5:5 is in reference to God as being the Pride of Israel. This statement would have the Lord as "testifying to his (Israel's) face."⁴³

הֵאֱרַח (content) which denotes the act of showing pleasure or to be pleased with a thing. This is only used in the causative stem thereby expressing a self-willed action. As used in 5:11 it would indicate that it pleased Ephraim to walk after man's commands rather than God's commandment.

This same word is also translated "foolish", showing wicked folly or to become a fool because of lack of insight and judgment.

לֹא יִחְשְׁבוּ (consider not) with the adverb perhaps taking the meaning of "hardly". These people would not consider the fact that strangers had devoured their strength nor would they consider the gray hair which signified perhaps the nearness of death.

43. Keil and Delitzsch, loc. cit.

כבוד (glory), which deals with external conditions or circumstances, speaks of abundance, honor, or riches. This had already departed from Ephraim and the warning was concerned with Israel who also was about to see the glory depart.

אמון (trust) denotes confidence or security. The Israelites had trusted God in past history and had been victorious even against overwhelming odds. Now Hosea accused them of putting their confidence in (mighty) (strong and valient) men. These were suppose to repel the onslaughts of the enemy but history bears out the fact that these mighty men were not worthy of the people's confidence for only God could be completely trusted.

נָסִיחַ (counsel) gives an insight into just how the people showed self-exaltation. The pattern which the Lord had intended the people to follow had been given in II Chronicles 7:14 which showed the very essence of humility in asking God to take control of their lives. This advice had been rejected and now the people were satisfied to follow their own counselling or advice.

עוֹשֵׂה רֵיחַ (rich) which denotes abounding in goods or possessions. Hosea expressed this as a proud boast of the people:

...and Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth; in all my labors they shall

find in me no iniquity that were sin.(12:8).

It is interesting to note that there is a particle of relation, $\aleph \psi \chi$, with the word $\aleph \phi \eta$ (sin). Perhaps with the negative also being used here the translation could "no sinful sin" denoting that there were no visible, outbroken sin.

$\aleph \psi \eta$ (exalted) and $\eta \eta \aleph$ (exalted), both denote the lifting up or rising to an exalted position. Hosea spoke in 13:1 and 13:6 of Israel's self-exaltation and how their rejection came to pass because of just such circumstances. Along with exaltation comes the word $\gamma \eta \psi$ (filled) which shows the self satisfaction expressed by these people. They had exalted themselves into God's position and were satisfied with the results.

Viewing the circumstances concerning God's view of the condition which prevailed in Israel and the people's view of their own condition, there is no alternative left but disciplinary action by Jehovah. Hosea proclaimed just such chastisement as judgment against the people, which perhaps took place while he was yet alive. Actually the people deserved no better treatment than the Canaanites who occupied the land

prior to the Exodus. Israel had fallen into the same moral and spiritual degradation.

Much can be said here concerning the practices which prevailed but that will be taken up more extensively later. The main point of interest is in the fact that the Israelites could even yet repent and turn aside the coming wrath of God. This they did not choose to do so the Lord promised that after the captivity (the punishment) God would receive them back as His people. 14:4-9.

CHAPTER VI

IDOLATRY

It would be difficult, indeed, to attempt to gain insight into the emotions of those involved in the Book of Hosea without searching out the corruption behind the idolatrous practices which Hosea condemns. There must be light thrown upon the conditions existing when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan for it was these conditions which prevailed even down to the day of Hosea's prophecy. (See Table VI).

As the Israelites came into Canaan they were confronted with a religion which had already been an inter-mingling of several pagan religions, all of which had as the basis the fertility idea of worship. In this could be seen the most abominable practices imaginable. It is little wonder that the righteousness of God should rebel against such conditions and that He should command the people of Israel to blot out the nations of Canaan completely from the face of the earth.

To this command, the Israelites were not faithful, but allowed some of these pagan people to remain in

their midst even after the conquest of the land. Because of their disobedience the Israelites were constantly falling away from God and following after the gods of the nations in their midst. Not only were they constantly punished for this disobedience but it eventually led to the downfall of the Israelitish nation. It is impossible to compute the exact number of gods and goddesses which the Canaanites worshipped because of the overlapping in names and deeds of the deities worshipped. The more familiar are the only ones listed here, and only a brief account will be given for each of these.

The highest in the old Canaanite pantheon was El, a solar deity, called "the father of years," or "the king". He was god in himself, god par excellence. The productivity of the earth was dependent upon him and was brought about annually by his ritualistic marriage.⁴⁴ El was symbolized by the bull as an earthly manifestation.⁴⁵ There were many localized manifestations or particular phases of El.⁴⁶

44. Elmer E. Leslie, Old Testament Religion, p. 22.

45. Herbert Livingston, Unpublished Syllabus of Hebrew Religion in the making (Wilmore, Ky.: Asbury Theological Seminary).

46. Leslie, op. cit. p. 23.

The female counterpart of El was his wife Asherat, a sea goddess.⁴⁷ She was also called Asherat-of-the-sea," the mother of gods," and the chief goddess of the Canaanites. She was connected with the underground waters which created the fountains and springs.⁴⁸

Next in importance to El was Baal, his son. Baal was also personified by the bull form.⁴⁹ There were many of these Baalim worshipped in Canaan. There were Baalim of mountains, Baalim who were lords of specific cities, Baalim of places, etc.⁵⁰

Baal had a wife named Asherah⁵¹ or Baalath.

Her symbol was the stump or stock of a tree(Hosea 4:12) or a wooden post, both being familiar embodiments and emblems of the feminine principle in deity at the High Places, to which cultic objects she gave her name.⁵²

Then, to complete the list (since all are not to be dealt with) there was Mot, the god of death and

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- 47. Livingston, loc. cit..
 - 48. Leslie, loc. cit..
 - 49. Livingston, loc. cit..
 - 50. Leslie, op. cit., pp. 5-26.
 - 51. Livingston, loc. cit..
 - 52. Leslie, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

winter.⁵³

One of the most characteristic elements of the Canaanite worship was the sacrificial system. The first to be considered was the animal sacrificial system where bulls, castrated sheep, rams, calves and sucking lambs were used for the victims. In another area bulls, he-goats, kids, cocks, and pullets were used. Because of these sacrifices the gods were suppose to reward the giver.

The second type and the most efficacious of all was human sacrifice which actually continued up until the second century A D. Most of the humans sacrificed were infants or young children.⁵⁴

This type of sacrificial system is not to be regarded as tradition but contemporary. Archaeologists have found evidence of this in several places:

At Megiddo, from Canaanite times, Schumacher found the body of a child buried in a jar at the foot of the city wall. Beside the skeleton lay a water jar with handle, and outside the bell-shaped cover of the jar there was a pottery eating -vessel. Several rows of stones surrounded

53. Livingston, loc. cit.

54. Leslie, op. cit. pp. 45-46.

this jar. In the east wall of the fortress, between the lowest layer of the foundation and the second layer, was found a jar enclosing the body of a child. The jar was covered by a small stone plate. It contained, along with the body, two small jars and an eating vessel.⁵⁵

Dr. Macalister, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, in his excavations of Gezer, 1904-1909, found, in the Canaanite city which preceded Israelite occupation, of about 1500 B.C., the ruins of a 'high place,' which had been a temple in which they worshipped their god Baal and their goddess Astereth. It was an enclosure 150 ft. by 120 ft., surrounded by a wall, open to the sky, where the inhabitants held their religious festivals. Within the walls were 10 rude stone pillars, 5 to 11 ft. high, before which the sacrifices were offered.

Under the debris, in this high place, Macalister found great numbers of jars containing the remains of children who had been sacrificed to Baal. The whole area proved to be a cemetery for new-born infants. The infants were never more than a week old.

Another horrible practice was what they called "foundation sacrifices." When a house was to be built a child would be sacrificed and its body built into the wall to bring good luck to the rest of the family. Many of these were found in Gezer. They have been found at Megiddo, Jericho, also, and other places.⁵⁶

It is not surprising that God should be so set against idolatry since these practices were prevalent.

Perhaps the most horrible aspect of Canaanite worship in the sight of God and Hosea was the fertility cult or as Leslie calls it "the Adonis Cult."⁵⁷

55. Ibid.

56. Henry H. Halley, (~~Back to~~ Bible Handbook (Chicago: Henry H. Halley, 1948), p. 157.

57. Leslie, op. cit. p. 48.

The exact history of this cult is obscure but it is thought to have gone back to Tammuz of Babylon. The system is a worship of the male and female reproductive principles which are considered to be inherent in the universe and nature. The father male gods of this cult usually connected with the sky, sun, fire and/or water. The offspring male god was usually identical with some type of green plant growth. This plant, the staple crop of a specific area, most often took different names, but there was one common feature- this god died at the harvest time and there was a festival of mourning. It arose in the spring and there was a festival of rejoicing.

The female goddesses were usually connected with the soil and they were great uninhibited lovers.

There were various rituals and practices tied in with this fertility cult worship. The spring planting of seed was thought of in terms of sex union. Orgiastic festivals, where sex played a prominent role, were frequent occurrences. There was ritualistic fornication in which both men and women were dedicated to offering their bodies to the public in the temples.

This led to sexual abuse and made sex offences common. The tau or cross was a common symbol, which had a phallic or sexual meaning.⁵⁸

Modern day archaeology has uncovered much on the subject of the fertility cult.

Another very interesting discovery at Gezer, Macalister found, under the rubbish, in the "high places" enormous quantities of images and plaques of Ashtoreth with rudely exaggerated sex organs, designed to foster sensual feelings.⁵⁹

Found by the Expedition of Xenia Seminary and the American School, 1926-28, at Kinyath-sepher, in the Canaanite stratum of pre-Israelite times, is an image of Ashtoreth, which is now in the Xenia Seminary at Pittsburgh. It is a limestone image of the goddess with a large snake coming out of the earth between her ankles, coiling about her legs, its head entering her sex organ. Two other similar images have since been found, one at Beth-shemesh, and the other at Athlit.⁶⁰

Temples of Baal and Ashtoreth were usually together. Priestesses were temple prostitutes. Sodomites were male temple prostitutes. The worship of Baal, Ashtoreth, Molech and other Canaanite gods consisted of the most extravagant orgies; their temples were centers of vice.⁶¹

Although much more could be said concerning the horrors of Canaanite worship, this is sufficient to show why there was such a rebellion against the practices of idolatry in the nature of God and the Prophet, Hosea.

58. Livingston, loc. cit.

59. Halleys, loc. cit.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

Perhaps enough has been said about Baal already in this study, but one reference in particular in Hosea is significant. This is found in Hosea 9:10 in which the prophet spoke of how in the history of Israel they were going after false gods, and, during his day, continuing on in the same way $\text{לִי־בַּלְזַבְדִּים}$ is the Baal of Peor, as mentioned in Numbers 25:1-3, a localized god. The Scripture reports that the people devoted or consecrated themselves to that $\text{וְשִׁמְתָּ$ (shame). Leslie has declared that the shameful thing which is referred to was sacred prostitution.⁶²

It is interesting to note how the golden calves set up to represent Jehovah by Jeroboam after the division of the empire, came to be mingled with the worship of Baal.

Perhaps the calves were at first meant to be personifications of Jehovah but soon Israel was following similiar practices of worship as the nations around them. Now they put no more restraint on their carnal passions and lust than the beast whose forms they placed in their temples. Men grow like the gods they worship. The animal part of their nature soon prevail over the spiritual. As soon as a man suffers the beast in him to prevail, he grows worse than the beasts, and sinks below their level. What they do by the law of their nature, he does against the law of his nature. Hosea paints a dreadful

62. Elmer E. Leslie, The Prophets Tell Their Own Story (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1939), p. 49.

picture of the impotence and degradation into which the Israelites had sunk through their false worship.⁶³

The worship of the golden calves became mixed with the worship of the bull cult or Baal. Also this would lead to a mingling with the fertility cult of which the bull worshippers were a part. As Hosea spoke for Jehovah against such practices, he referred to the

בָּנֵי בָקָר (calf) worshippers of Samaria (Hosea 8:5).

The prophet spoke out against the practices of these calf worshippers in Hosea 13:2 in which he says that men פִּשְׁקוּ (kiss) the בָּנֵי בָקָר (calf). Another interpretation for this verse would read:

..."Sacrificers of men: let them kiss the calves. This would also tie the practice of human sacrifice into the worship of Israel.

Hosea singled out objects which pertain to the worship of Baal, when he criticized the practices of the people. As for the green vegetation, Hosea mentioned the אֲשֵׁר (terebinth), the אֵילָן (oak) and the אֲזָבִיחַ (poplar) as the groves where the people worshipped. The trunks or stumps of these trees had a definite meaning for they represented

63. Joseph S. Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, The Minor Prophets (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company), p. 155.

Asherah or wife of Baal.

The places of worship were definitely of importance and Hosea points out that there were certain places which the worshippers frequented.

In Hosea 4:13, the prophet speaks of two such places. $\text{ר} \text{ר}$ (mountain) indicates that the place used was high or in keeping with the term in Canaanite worship "high place."

Mountain-tops and hills were favorite places for idolatrous worship; because men thought, that they were nearer to heaven and the deity.⁶⁴

Also worship was carried on upon the $\text{ר} \text{ר} \text{ר}$ (hill) for the same reason. In Hosea 10:8, the term $\text{ר} \text{ר} \text{ר}$ (high place) is used to signify these places of worship.

Other than the practice of kissing the calves, there are three practices of great significance in the change for the people into Canaanitish worship.

The first is found in Hosea 4:13 where the prophet speaks of the practice $\text{ר} \text{ר} \text{ר}$ (sacrificing) upon the top of the mountains. The blood sacrifice of idolatry has been covered previously so there is no need to cover this topic further except to recall that

64. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 153.

there were human sacrifices as well as animal sacrifices being offered to pagan gods.

In the same verse the practice of $\aleph \ominus \overline{P}$ (burning incense) which means to raise up an odor by burning. Also included in this is the burnt sacrifice or offering up smoke from the fat of a victim.

Then in 4:14, Hosea speaks of the practice of offering a sacrifice with the $\aleph \phi \overline{7} \overline{P}$ (prostitute) or temple prostitute..

Oesterley and Robinson take this element of Canaanite worship and apply it to the first three chapters of the book of Hosea. They use the supposition that Gomer was originally a temple prostitute and therefore very much a part of the idolatrous worship. This would account, they believe for the sex-obsession of Hosea which drove him to do the thing he hated most- become tied to a temple prostitute.⁶⁵

Though idolatry seemed to be flourishing in Hosea's day, the punishment from God was sure to fall as He declared it would. The method of destruction He mentioned first was forgetting or non-mentioning of

65. Ibid, p. 81.

the names of Baal. The word, זָכַר actually is better translated as remember so that 2:17 reads remember no more the names of Baal.

Hosea speaks again of destruction in 8:5 as he stated:

He hath זָרַק (cast off or rejected) thy calf,
 O Samaria.....yea, the calf of Samaria shall be
 broken into זָרָק (pieces or splinters).

Or in other words the idols shall be broken into small fragments.

Final destruction would come to the golden calves when the kingdom would fall before the Assyrians.

Then the calf would be זָרַק (carried or led) into captivity, thus taken out of the land by the king of Assyria.

This brief discussion can only give a quick insight into the religious conditions prevailing among the Canaanites and the children of Israel during Hosea's prophecy. There has much material already written upon this subject but for the purpose of studying the emotions of God and people of the day, this would seem sufficient to acquaint the reader with prevailing conditions.

CHAPTER VII

THE EXISTING PROBLEMS

With these things apparent it is easy to see the problems which are created. In order for a solution to be worked out there would necessarily have to be compromise or a reversal by the people. This was continuously before the prophet as he pleaded with the people.

The position into which God was forced. The people had gone in the way opposite to the covenant direction. Their choice had been with the people of Canaan and their gods. No longer was God (יהוה) the One who was honored with their adoration except in an outward form.

God had not changed. The covenant which was compared to a betrothal was yet binding. His feeling towards it was still אהבה (covenant love) but Israel had broken every vow. The whole country, priest, rulers and people, had turned away from God.

Because of the existing conditions a dilemma was created placing God in this controversial position.

God loved Israel as a child, and called him out

them aside to be eternally lost. This would have been just reward for their wickedness. They had earned just such punishment and had worked hard for it.

The choice before the people. Hosea places before the children of Israel one of two choices. The first way in which they could go would be the way of repentance. This one is pleaded for by the Lord through the prophet. If only Israel would desire it, God could heal them of their backsliding. The covenant relationship would be reinstated with its promises and blessings. Israel would be the peculiar people of God ($\square \{ \square \}$). No longer would the false gods have a place in the land.

The other alternative was that the people could follow the false gods and be rejected. They could continue with their outward form in the worship of God but their affections could be turned to paganism.

The latter was the choice of the people. They rejected God and sought refuge in the ways of the Canaanites. This left the Lord, seemingly to the only two alternatives which remained as formerly stated.

However, as is recorded in the Word of God, neither was their fate. God found a way of seeing justice prevail and yet continue to call the children of Israel by His name. This came about by the exile. Seemingly the people of Israel were completely rejected but God was with them in exile and brought a remnant back into the promised land.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF THE PROPHET'S MARRIAGE

The Prophet had very little to say which would give an insight into his life except that which he recorded in the first three chapters. Often here it is difficult to distinguish whether he is referring to himself and his marital problems or to God and the covenant relationship with Israel.

Hosea is commanded by God to go and take for his wife an unfaithful woman.

וְיִלְכָּד (wife of whoredoms) occurs only in the plural, expressing a plurality of acts. (used with וְיִלְכָּד), a woman whose element is whoredom, with whom וְיִלְכָּד is a thing not merely incidental.⁶⁷

This he did and begat children by this woman. As he became conscious of his wife's unfaithfulness, he could see the resemblance between his situation and the situation then existing between Israel and Jēhovah.

Hosea applied the marriage to Gomer as an analogy which pointed out the harlotry of Israel in "whoring away from God." Each incident in his married life was used as a springboard to point out to the people their apostacy.

When children were born into his home he gave them names which would reveal to the people their condition as viewed by the Lord. Each name seemed to be weighed with greater prophetic punishment.

Then the prophet's wife left him. He continued to love her and mourned her absence. Through this event, God revealed the fact that Israel had done a very similar deed. The phrase used here is ^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה} ^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה} ^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה} ^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה}

^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה} ^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה} ^{וְהָיָה כְּזָנָה} of which Lange states:

...for the whole land is whoring, whoring away from Jehovah (falling away from Jehovah). evidently a metaphorical expression here designating apostasy from Jehovah to idolatry, according to the conception of Israel's relation to Jehovah as that of marriage. He who serves idols accordingly commits whoredom and breaks the marriage vow, is unfaithful to a lawful spouse, because surrendering himself to a stranger, with whom no marriage relation can exist.⁶⁷

Some of the depths of degradation has been noted in the section on idolatry.

Even through the children, Hosea tried to regain his unfaithful wife but to no avail. Leslie states that the wife had been

....An Israelite sanctuary maiden, one of the sacred harlots such as had thronged Canaanite High Places as votaries of the goddess Ashtart. Due to the stubborn influence of the fertility cult of Baal upon the religion of my (Hosea's) people, the practice of cultic prostitution was still counteracted at Israelite sanctuaries and was indeed just taken for

67. Lange, op. cit., p. 24.

granted by the majority of my people.⁶⁸

Hosea had married this prostitute, who had been faithful for a short while but then he came to the realization that his wife had backslidden into the old life she had formerly followed as a votary of the sanctuary.⁶⁹

There are many interpretations of these incidents in the life of Hosea. Pfeiffer held the opinion that at the time of the marriage, Gomer, the woman Hosea took for his wife, was a virtuous woman. Then after the first child was born she became unfaithful. He felt the woman mentioned in chapter three was different from the wife mentioned in chapter one. The entire misinterpretation would be because of the linkage of these two women into one person.⁷⁰

Young found it difficult to attribute such a command to the Person of God. He stated that such an action by Hosea as marrying a harlot would make his ministry of no effect.

Consequently, in company with many Biblical students, the present writer has become more and more convinced that the entire episode has a symbolical significance. The entire message was revealed to the prophet, and the prophet related this revelation to the people. If this is the case then we can immediately perceive the forcefulness and the effectiveness of the message.

68. Leslie, loc. cit.

69. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

70. Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1947)

It is forceful and direct. It portrays the love of God for the sinful and adulterous nation and reaches its climax in the announcement that the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea.⁷¹

Along with the allegorical and analogical interpretations of Hosea's marriage problem there is the literal interpretation as held by many scholars. Even though E. J. Young does not agree with this interpretation, he defends their position.

There is much to be said in defence of this literal interpretation. For one thing the prophecy reads as straightforward narrative. At first sight, we receive the impression that these things are to be understood as actually having taken place. It is perfectly understandable, then, that many christian expositors would regard the literal interpretation as at this point correct.⁷²

After considering the material which has been presented in this study it would continue to be an impossibility to present an unshakable statement concerning the question of interpretation as well as other problems. There are, however, insights into the character of the prophet, the purpose of God, and the condition of the people which can be recognized.

The prophet Hosea definately had the capacity to love a woman faithfully even when the circumstances were completely unfavorable. He also had an unshakable faith in God and was

71. Young, op. cit. p. 246.

72. Ibid. p. 245.

willing to take the commands of God as literal. This combination of love and faith would make any man a great man.

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