

The Book of Hosea

Chapter One

I. Background Information

A. The Author - Hosea

1. His name means “salvation”, similar to Joshua.
2. Son of Beerli (“well, fountain”)
3. Resident of the Northern Kingdom of Israel
 - a) His prophetic message centers around the Northern Kingdom
 - b) He shows much familiarity with the region
 - c) His tomb is claimed to be in Safed, a town in Galilee (for whatever its worth)
4. His ministry seems to have lasted at least fifty years.
5. Relation to other prophets:
 - a) Contemporary of Isaiah
 - b) He and Amos, who preceded him, ministered to the Northern Kingdom during this period.
 - c) Many parallels to Jeremiah
 - (1) Both known for sadness, suffering
 - (2) Both proclaimed coming judgement to unheeding audiences

B. The Setting

1. The Decline and Fall of the Northern Kingdom
 - a) Illusions of prosperity and success
 - b) Spiritual and moral decline

C. Basic Outline

1. The Personal Example of Hosea - Chapters 1-3
2. The Prophecies of Hosea - Chapters 4-14

D. Important Topics to Consider

1. The use of names is very important in this book.
 - a) Names had much more meaning to the ancient Jews.
 - b) Pay close attention to their meanings
2. The use of an “object lesson” in Hosea’s marriage
 - a) God uses the illustration of Gomer’s unfaithfulness to illustrate Israel’s unfaithfulness to Him
 - b) Note that this really happened. It is not allegorical, nor are “code words” beings used (i.e. Gomer’s harlotry is really idolatry in poetic terms)
3. Judgement and Restoration
 - a) A common theme in the Prophetic books is coming judgment, but also note that coupled with this are promises of future blessing
 - b) Many of these promises look forward to the Millennial Kingdom
4. In spite of being a “minor” prophet, this book is quoted around thirty times in the New Testament.

II. Chapter One

A. Gomer

1. Name means “completion, consummation,”

2. Her father was Diblaim (“two fig cakes” *and I’m not making that up!*)
3. “of whoredoms” probably speaks of the ritualistic prostitution connected with Baal worship.
 - a) Remember the shape the Northern Kingdom is in. Hosea is in the minority by remaining true to God.
- B. vs. 2 - “for the land hath committed...” - note here that the appearance of prevalent theme of spiritual unfaithfulness illustrated through marital unfaithfulness.
- C. The Children
 1. God chooses to speak through the names of these children, much like he did with Isaiah (Isaiah 8:1-4)
 2. Jezreel
 - a) Means “scattered”
 - b) Significance
 - (1) Foretells the end of Jehu’s dynasty on the Northern throne (II Kings 10:29-30)
 - (2) Foreshadows the defeat of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria
 3. Loruhamah
 - a) Means “unpitiably, no more mercy”
 - b) Significance
 - (1) The Northern Kingdom’s fate is sealed
 - (2) By contrast, the Southern Kingdom of Judah is granted more time by divine deliverance (see II Kings 19:35 for details)
 4. Loammi
 - a) Means “not my people”
 - b) Significance
 - (1) Shows the complete breakdown in the relationship between God and His people.
 - (2) However, the promises of God are faithful and He will keep his promise to Abraham (compare 1:10 and Genesis 22:17)
- D. Looking Ahead...
 1. Note verse 11.
 2. This is unfulfilled. Israel has not been reunited as described here.
 3. “day of Jezreel” - I think this refers to the Battle of Armageddon, which takes place in the Valley of Jezreel.
 4. Thus, the promise here is fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom

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Chapters Two and Three

I. Review

- A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
- B. God used Hosea's marriage to Gomer as an object lesson for God and Israel's relationship.
- C. Hosea's children were also given prophetic names: Jezebel ("scattered"), Loruhamah ("unpitiabale"), and Loammi ("not my people")

II. Chapter Two

- A. Note the voice does not change. This is God speaking (see 1:9 and 2:13)
- B. vs 1 - Note the change of the names here. The negative "lo" is dropped and thus we have "My People" and "Pitied".
- C. vs 2-5 - This is God speaking about Israel, that has been unfaithful to Him.
- D. vs. 4 - the guiltiness belongs not only to the nation, but to the individuals.
- E. vs. 6-13 - illustrate God's judgment
- F. vs. 14 - "allure" means to court
- G. vs. 15 - "valley of Achor"
 - 1. this is the valley that Achan was stoned at in Joshua 7:24
 - 2. illustrates the fact that restoration waits beyond judgment.
- H. vs. 16 - "THAT DAY"
 - 1. this is one of my favorite prophetic terms
 - 2. It is sort of vague but points to future events, whether judgement or blessing
- I. vs. 16 - more names!
 - 1. Ishi - husband
 - 2. Baali - lord or master
 - 3. The significance here is that the first is a term of endearment, affection, and intimacy, while the second is simply a title of position.
- J. vs. 17 - This Baalim (plural) refers to false gods.
- K. vs. 18 - another reference to the Millennial Kingdom (Isaiah 11:6)
- L. vs. 23 - "...which are not my people"
 - 1. Brings us full circle with Loammi and Ammi.
 - 2. Also a glimpse of Gentile believers

III. Chapter Three

- A. Much has happened that we are not informed of. We see that Hosea still loves Gomer (3:1) who has returned to her wickedness and now is enslaved (3:2).
- B. vs. 2 - "Fifteen pieces of silver" and 1.5 homers of barley
 - 1. Hopefully we are familiar with 30 shekels of silver being the price of a servant/slave (Exodus 21:32, Zechariah 11:13, Matthew 26:15)
 - 2. Two ways of looking at this:
 - a) She was only half as valuable as a slave.
 - b) Hosea was a man of meager means who gave all that he had (silver and barley) to redeem his wife (I like this one!)

- C. vs. 4-5 - once again we look ahead to a restoration of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom.
- D. vs. 4 - “teraphim” appears to be household idols, which would mean that Israel is existing without true or false worship.

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Chapters Four and Five

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. The first three chapters focus on the use of Hosea's marriage to Gomer as an object lesson for God and Israel's relationship.
 - C. Beginning in chapter four we move away from this object lesson, and into various prophecies given to Hosea.
- II. Chapter Four
 - A. In this chapter we take a stark look at the condition of God's people
 - B. vs. 2 - I think they've knocked out at least 4 of the 10 Commandments!
 - C. vs. 3 - Note the tie between the health of the land and the spiritual health of the people (II Chronicles 7:14)
 - D. vs. 6 - This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. We focus too much on "do, do, do" but neglect "know, know, know"
 - E. vs. 9 - note that the distinction between priesthood and people, or leadership and followers, is taken away in respect to responsibility.
 - F. vs. 12 - stocks and staff speak of idols and divination
 - G. vs. 14 - there is an interesting fact here that God is holding back His reproofing hand to let them suffer the natural consequences of their actions (Hebrews 12:6)
 - H. vs. 15 - Bethaven - "house of iniquity", also known as Bethel or "House of God". The name change seems to correspond with the setting up of idols there (I Kings 12:28-33)
 - I. vs. 17 - Ephraim - Because of its connection to Jeroboam that rebelled against Solomon (I Kings 11:26), it seems likely that this term represents the royalty of the Northern Kingdom, or the kingdom itself by extension.
- III. Chapter Five
 - A. This chapter pictures the coming judgment upon Israel.
 - B. vs. 1 - Mizpah and Mt. Tabor are on opposite sides of the Jordan, highlighting the spread of the wrongdoing
 - C. vs. 2 - despite God's opposition, they sunk lower.
 - D. vs. 5-6 - note that the people turn to God *after* judgment, but by then it is too late.
 - E. vs. 13 - King Jareb - means "avenger", represents Assyria, whom both Kingdoms had attempted alliances with (II Kings 15:19, 17:3,16:7)
 - F. vs. 14-15 - God brings judgment then awaits His people to repent

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Chapter Six

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- II. Chapter Six
 - A. This chapter shows the hardness of Israel's heart as they refuse to turn to God wholly, and willfully continue in rebellion.
 - B. vs. 1-3 - The people's response in turning back to the Lord, which seems kind of selfish to me.
 1. vs. 1 - note the callback to 5:14 which says "I will tear and go away". Israel is betting on God's mercy.
 2. vs. 2 - There is a possible reference here to Christ's Resurrection on the third day, and possibly this verse is alluded to in I Corinthians 15:4.
 3. vs. 3 - "in the land of Israel they had usually two rains in a year; the one in autumn, or quickly after the seed was sown; the other in the spring, when the corn was ripe, and harvest near, and which was very reviving and refreshing to the earth, and the fruits of it" - John Gill
 - C. vs. 4 - God's response to the people: "How long will it last this time?"
 - D. vs. 6 - VERY IMPORTANT! God was not interested in the rituals of the Law as much as the personal holiness that should accompany them!
 - E. vs. 7 - "like men" - basically like Adam, in the fallen nature, turn to sin instead of good - Romans 3:10,23
 - F. vs. 8 - Gilead, known for its balm of healing (see Genesis 37:25, Jeremiah 8:22 and 46:11), is now corrupt and polluted.
 - G. vs. 9 - "lewdness" - The Hebrew word here is *zimmah* which Strongs defines as "a *plan*, especially a bad one: - heinous crime, lewd (-ly, -ness), mischief, purpose, thought, wicked (device, mind, -ness)."
 - H. vs. 10 - I think this verse illustrates the Ephraim is not a term used for the entire kingdom of Israel. These are two distinct entities. There is a terrible thing in the nation, led by its leaders sins, and the nation is corrupted.
 - I. vs. 11 - This verse pictures both the Babylonian captivity ("harvest") of Judah and also its return.

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Chapter Seven

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
 - D. Chapter Seven continues thoughts from Chapter 6, such as the use of the word "robbers" in 6:9 and 7:1
- II. Chapter Seven
 - A. vs. 1 - once the Lord had helped Israel in one area, another deeper and greater sin was exposed.
 - B. vs. 1 - thief and robbers - this is showing a breakdown of society, anarchy
 - C. vs. 2 -
 - D. vs. 3 - The leaders were encouraging and supporting the downward slide
 - E. vs. 4 - the picture here of the oven is this: that as a preheated oven is prepared for baking, so their hearts are prepared for wickedness. This is premeditated evil.
 - F. vs. 5 - "the day of our king" - probably a celebration of the king's birthday or coronation. The king on this day embarrassed the nation and himself with his behavior. I think this probably refers to an historical event familiar to the hearer in the day.
 - G. vs. 6 - The people had prepared themselves for evil.
 - H. vs. 7 - the pervasiveness of the wickedness
 - I. vs. 8 - Wonderful imagery here:
 - 1. "mixed himself" - whether by marriage or customs, the watering down of the Jewish identity
 - 2. "cake not turned" - think of a pancake that you never flip over
 - J. vs. 9 - they are unable to see their own condition.
 - K. vs. 10-16 - picture a people desperate not to turn back to God when they know that is the answer.
 - L. vs. 11 - Desperate for help they turn to pagan powers (2 Kings 17:4, 2 Kings 15:19)
 - M. vs. 12-16 - This is some of the strongest language we have seen so far. God has had enough of His people's rebellion and unfaithfulness.
 - N. vs. 16 - deceitful bow - I think we have enough hunter to appreciate a gun no sited in properly...

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Chapter Eight

I. Review

- A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
- B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
- C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- D. In this chapter we have the vain hopes of Israel against judgment: idols (vs.5), hired allies (vs. 9), heartless worship (vs. 11)

II. Chapter Seven

- A. vs. 1 - the eagle represents Assyria. John Gill says it speaks of "of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, compared to this creature for his swiftness in coming, his strength, fierceness, and cruelty; this creature being swift in flight, and a bird of prey."
- B. vs. 2 - It seems the only time people look is when they are lying flat on their backs.
- C. vs. 3 - good - that which is holy, righteous, and by extension God Himself
- D. vs. 4 - they were trusting in their plans and riches, not in God
- E. vs. 5-6 - I love it when God mocks idols.
- F. vs. 7 - ever heard that phrase?
- G. vs. 9 - a picture of their vain attempts at foreign alliance
- H. vs. 10 - "sorrow a little" - probably refers to tribute payment to Assyria
- I. vs. 11 - Adam Clarke says "Though it does not appear that the Jews in Babylon were obliged to worship the idols of the country, except in the case mentioned by Daniel, yet it was far otherwise with the Israelites in Assyria, and the other countries of their dispersion. Because they had made many altars to sin while they were in their own land, they were obliged to continue in the land of their captivity a similar system of idolatry against their will. Thus they felt and saw the evil of their idolatry, without power to help themselves."
- J. vs. 12-13 - once again we see that God looks upon the heart and not the actions of the worshipper
- K. vs. 14 - the Northern Kingdom trusted in its false religion, the Southern in its military strength. Neither will stand against God's judgment.

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Chapter Nine

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
 - D. In this chapter God describes the judgment that is coming, in dispersion (1-9) and then barrenness (10-17)
- II. Chapter Nine
 - A. vs. 1 - Instead of repenting or mourning, Israel's unfaithfulness becomes even more widespread.
 - B. vs. 3 - Dispersion. The people will be taken from the land and scattered. This was a key method of subjugation used by Assyria and later empires.
 - C. vs. 4-5 - turning too little, too late
 - D. vs. 6 - note the humiliation of condition in judgment. From riches to thorns.
 - E. vs. 7-8 - these verse describe the false spirituality that the people trusted in. The prophets mentioned are false prophets.
 - F. vs. 9 - Gibeah - the terrible crime of Judges 19. To be compared to that is mind-boggling.
 - G. vs. 10 - Baalpeor - see Numbers 25:1-15.
 - H. vs. 11 - They will be unable to have children
 - I. vs. 12 - the surviving generation will be destroyed
 - J. vs. 13 - Comparing the capital Samaria to the city of Tyre in Phoenicia. Both appear impregnable, but both fell to conquerers.
 - K. vs. 15 - Gilgal pops up again. Based on this and 4:15, it is assumed that it must have been a center of idolatry.
 - L. vs. 17 - another allusion to dispersion

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Chapter Ten

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- II. Chapter Ten
 - A. vs. 1 - The image here is of a vine that is uncultivated and wild. It grows unpruned and its purpose unfulfilled. Instead of producing fruit it grows even larger.
 - B. vs. 2 - I Kings 18:1, Matthew 6:24
 - C. vs. 3 - This is despair. But note the focus on the king instead of the Lord.
 - D. vs. 4 - their empty words and empty promises led to empty fields.
 - E. vs. 5 - Bethaven - "house of iniquity", also known as Bethel or "House of God". The name change seems to correspond with the setting up of idols there (I Kings 12:28-33)
 - F. vs. 7 - nice imagery here with the foam. Ever see how easily a wave washes it away on a shore?
 - G. vs. 8 - Aven = Bethaven, here dropping "house of" and simply called "iniquity"
 - H. vs. 9 - Gibeah - the terrible crime of Judges 19. Also mentioned in 9:9
 - I. vs. 10 - between two furrows - image of plowing but but staying straight.
 - J. vs. 11 - Lot of agricultural imagery here. First, the heifer treading the corn in a mill had a cushy job with lots of snacking (Deuteronomy 25:4). Below this job, and with much harder labor, was being yoked to a plow and pulling it over fields. Ephraim is thus humbled, with Judah working alongside, with Jacob, or Israel itself, having the lowly job of busting up chunks of earth the blow didn't properly work.
 - K. vs. 12-13 - the laws of sowing and reaping are in affect (Galatians 6:7-9)
 - L. vs. 14 - Shalman and Betharbel - probably refers to a great victory by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser, but is sadly lost to history. This probably was a recent event for Hosea.
 - M. vs. 15 - Note the name change of Bethel, no longer Bethaven. Why? The idols have been removed through judgment.

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Chapter Eleven

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- II. Chapter Eleven
 - A. vs. 2 - the "they" here refers to Moses and Aaron, or possibly the prophets in general. The idea is that Israel turned from God in spite of the admonitions of His faithful servants.
 - B. vs. 3 - the imagery here is of teaching a child to walk.
 - C. vs. 4 - this continues the imagery of the heifer from the previous chapter. Here we see a kind and loving owner caring for his beloved animal.
 - D. vs. 5-6 - In spite of God's goodness, judgment is still coming. Not because God ceases to be good, but because Israel ceases to repent. But note God's control in this.
 - E. vs. 7 - a telling verse: the people are simply bent on backsliding, even so that when they call on God they are not revering Him as they should.
 - F. vs. 8 - Admah and Zeboim - cities near Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14:2, 19:25) that were destroyed with those wicked cities (Deuteronomy 29:23)
 - G. vs. 9 - a faithful remnant will be preserved through judgment. This is a hallmark of God's dealings with man.
 - H. vs. 10-11 - this speaks of the return of Israel back to their land following judgment.
 - I. vs. 12 - Very abrupt change here from the faithful remnant back to the present backsliders in the Northern Kingdom and the still faithful in the Southern. This verse serves as a transition to the next chapter.

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Chapter Twelve

I. Review

- A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
- B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
- C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- D. Chapter 12 jumps in almost mid-thought from chapter 11.
- E. In Chapter 12, God rebukes Israel's pride and rebellion by pointing to the humble beginnings and His role in the making of their nation.

II. Chapter Twelve

- vs. 1 - lots of stuff here. Ephraim is very unstable, carried away by every breeze. They are also playing a dangerous political game trying to build alliances with Assyria and Egypt.
- vs. 2 - After quickly bringing in the Southern Kingdom into the scene, the attention focuses on the all of Jacob's descendants (all of Israel), regardless of the Kingdom they claim.
- vs. 3 - HISTORY LESSON TIME! Genesis 25:26. Jacob holding Esau's heel at birth gave him the name "Jacob" ("supplanter"). This is a picture of tripping someone by deceit.
- vs. 4 - HISTORY LESSON TIME! Genesis 32:22-32 - Jacob wrestling with the "angel". I believe this was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.
- vs. 5 - This brief history lesson is used to remind Israel of who they are and who they serve.
- vs. 6 - another call to repentance. In spite of the rebellion of Israel God's promises are still true for them.
- vs. 7 - Back to Ephraim here (note the "thou" to "he" subject change), comparing him to a crooked businessman
- vs. 8 - Ephraim credits any success they've had to themselves and not to God.
- vs. 9 - God's promise to humble them back into living in tents.
- vs. 10 - Israel turned to evil in spite of God's continued warnings
- vs. 11 - Gilgal and Gilead are on opposite side of Jordan, showing the pervasiveness of the idolatry.
- vs. 11 - heaps in the furrows of the field - like rocks piled out of a plowed field
- vs. 12 - HISTORY LESSON TIME! Genesis 29. God is showing that their origin was from a man who worked for years to marry his wives. Humble beginnings.
- vs. 13 - HISTORY LESSON TIME! God used Moses and Joshua to bring Israel from being slaves in Egypt to settlers in Canaan. Humble beginnings again.
- vs. 14 - "leave his blood upon him" - not remove the guilt (John 9:41)
- What caused this final reaction from God? The pride of Ephraim and Israel. They forgot their humble past and their mighty God. They now were proud and turned to idols.

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Chapter Thirteen

- I. Review
 - A. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - B. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - C. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- II. Chapter Twelve
 - A. vs. 1 - A combination of Matthew 23:12 and Romans 6:23 in action
 - B. vs. 2 - note that the 'gods' they create are from themselves and not divine
 - C. vs. 4-5 - I love it when God brags!
 - D. vs. 6 - a heart filled with one's self has no room for God.
 - E. vs. 7-8 - God compares Himself to fierce predators. Not something you hear much of today!
 - F. vs. 9 - Who's fault is it when judgment comes? Not God's! We bring it upon ourselves.
 - G. vs. 11 - God never intended for Israel to have a king other than Himself. They looked at other kingdoms and wanted what those had but not what God wanted for them. see I Samuel 8.
 - H. vs. 12 - "bound" as in sealed or filed away
 - I. vs. 13 - the image of labor pains, sudden and severe. The
 - J. vs. 14 - Sound familiar? (I Corinthians 15:54,55)
 - K. vs. 15 - east wind appears again and speaks of drought and famine
 - L. vs. 16 - judgment and cruelties of the worst sort await them. Samaria would never be the city it once was

The Book of Hosea

Chapter Fourteen

- I. Review
 - A. We are finally done!!!!
 - B. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel who prophesied of its fall to Assyria.
 - C. Chapters 4-14 contain messages of the coming judgment upon Israel
 - D. God's indictment against Israel is across three groups: Israel, the nation and people; Ephraim, the ruling class or princes; and the priests. All these have failed in their duties to serve God.
- II. Chapter Twelve
 - A. Note that the first 7 verses deal with all of Israel, while the last two only with Ephraim. Personally, I think the fulfillment of these verses is yet to happen. It may point to the future restoration of Israel during the Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom
 - B. vs. 1 - note the cause of the fall - iniquity, sin.
 - C. vs. 2 - "calves of our lips" - a continuing sacrifice of praise
 - D. vs. 3 - Asshur - original capital of Assyria
 - E. vs. 3 - they are to turn away from trusting: fellow man, military might, idols
 - F. vs. 4 - God's mercy in action
 - G. vs. 5 - Lebanon - famed for its cedar forests - Psalm 29:5, 72:16
 - H. vs. 5 - God's blessing return through his mercy
 - I. vs. 5-7 - Note the appearance of "he" and "his". Who is this? It is Christ as the accepted Messiah
 - J. vs. 7 - pictures the regathering of Israel
 - K. vs. 8 - the green fir tree is a picture of Christ.
 - L. vs. 9 - Hosea summarizes his entire message in the last words of this book: Follow God! Similar to Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14