

GOD'S COMPASSION DESPITE ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE

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2 The more, I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols.

3 Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not, know that I healed them.

4 I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.

5 They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me.

6 The sword rages in their cities, it consumes their oracle-priests, and devours because of their schemes.

7 My people are bent on turning away from me. To the Most High they call, but he does not raise them up at all.

8 How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.

9 I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

10 They shall go after the LORD, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west.

11 They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.

—HOSEA 11:1-11

EXEGESIS PAPER

ON

HOSEA 11:1-11

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HOSEA 11:1-11 [NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION]

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I. THESIS

Hosea 11:1-11 is a poem that might be described as the “window to God's heart”¹ according to Professor Carol Dempsey, O.P. The text reveals the vacillation of God's heart ² using a parable built on the metaphor of a loving parent puzzled by a rebellious child (Israel). From its opening lines, this chapter is established as a testimony to divine love, the parental love, given freely long before the child can reciprocate with any understanding, and as we shall see in the study to follow, given continuously even when it is rejected.³ This section (11:1-11) ends the second major division of Hosea's book that began with "Hear the word of the LORD" (4:1) and concludes with the formula "Says the LORD" (v. 11b) to give “hope” as the last word.⁴ Hosea should be regarded as the first to base God's relationship to God's people on love, freely given love prior to any mutual relationship like covenant. Deuteronomy follows him in this and makes God's love a major theme. For Christians, this theme receives its climactic expression in the New Testament, especially in the Johannine writings (see John 3:16), witness to Jesus as the gift of God's love.⁵ The passage encourages contemporary readers to turn toward a broken and rebellious world with the hope of promise and renewal.

II. HISTORICAL/LITERARY BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL LOCATION

The evidence from the Book of Hosea suggests that Hosea witnessed the disintegration of the era of prosperity in the Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam II. He is unique among the Latter Prophets as a native of the north who prophesied during the kingdom's final years. The time frame of Hosea's ministry is indicated through his mention of the various kings under whom he prophesied. According to the superscription of the book (1:1), the southern kings included Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah and the northern king was Jeroboam II. Thus, it is safe to say that Hosea prophesied in the Iron Age approximately from 750 to 725 B.C.E.. Hosea probably began his ministry during the later part of the reign of Jeroboam II and continued until Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C.. When Hosea prophesied, the ten northern kings experienced military prominence and economic prosperity under Jeroboam II. Worship proliferated within Israel. Thus, throughout his book, Hosea denounces Baalism and warns of the covenant curses that are destined to come upon the nation because of its violation of the terms of the Mosaic Covenant (Deut 28:15-68).⁶ The major theme of the passage, however, is centralized in the metaphor of familial relationships, using the vehicles of the parents and children to symbolize the message of hope and love. Chapter 11 marks the heart of the prophet's message. The study to follow explores the world behind and the world in front of the text.

a. THE WORLD BEHIND THE TEXT

i. POLITICAL SITUATION:

Some portions of Hosea's book point to the stable, prosperous years at the close of the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.E.). For instance, Hos 10:1 speaks of a nation experiencing increased agricultural production, and 12:8 is familiar with the considerable commercial successes of this period. Then the death of Jeroboam II in 746 B.C.E. struck a woeful toll over the wealthy land of Israel. The history of Israel plunged from the peaceful years of Jeroboam II's reign to the chaos during the latter half of the eighth century.⁷ In the twenty-five years between the death of Jeroboam in 746 and the fall of Samaria in 722/21, there were six kings, four of whom were assassinated.⁸ The succinct record in 2 Kgs 15:8-31 captures a style similar of news casting on television, one stroke after another without time to breathe: "Zechariah, son of Jeroboam . . . was king . . . for six months. . . . Shallum, son of Jabesh . . . attacked and killed him. . . . Shallum reigned one month, till Menahem came up, attacked and killed Shallum. . . . Menahem punished the city of Tappuah, even to ripping open all the pregnant women..."⁹ The kingdom lurched from one military crisis to another: in 743, the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III, began his westward march into Syria-Palestine; the kingdoms of Israel and Aram joined forces to launch a war against Judah, known as the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-732); and finally, in 722/21, Samaria and the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the invading Assyrian army.¹⁰

ii. SOCIAL CONDITION:

Such political instability is a proliferation ground for other kinds of social turmoil and disorder. Hosea catalogs the social problems that afflict Israelite society at this time: "swearing, lying, and murder...stealing and adultery...bloodshed follows bloodshed" (4:2); drunkenness (4:11, 18); divination (4:12) and idolatry (4:13, 17; 8:4-6, 11; 10:1, 5-6; 11:2; 13:12); sexual promiscuity and orgies (4:13-14, 18); pride (5:5; 7:10), breaking the covenant (6:7; 8:1), bloodshed, murder (6:8-9), and robbery (6:9); in Israel "they deal falsely, the thief breaks in, and the bandits raid outside" (7:1); there are false oaths (10:4), wickedness and injustice (10:13), lies and deceit (11:12), and cheating merchants (12:7-8). The picture painted by Hosea shows Israelite society in chaos and infested with injustices. Hosea, like Amos, reports that there is much cultic activity. People are going to shrines in Gilgal, Bethel, and Samaria; they are offering sacrifices and observing religious rites. Yet these, in Hosea's view, are shrines and rites that only perpetuate Israel's idolatry and are thus unacceptable to the LORD (4:15; 6:8-10;

9:15, 11:2). Not unexpectedly, the priests officiating at these shrines and rites come in for severe condemn from Hosea (4:4-9; 5:1; 6:9; 10:5, 11:6).¹¹

iii. CULTURAL CONTEXT

The cultural context is just as important as the political history for understanding Hosea. As mentioned earlier, Hosea was a prophet of the Northern Kingdom, the only one whose words have come down to us in a separate book. In contrast to Judah, with its relatively stable Davidic dynasty, Israel's traditions concerning kingship involved designation by Yahweh's spirit, not just inherited descent, and even allowed for revolt in the name of Yahweh. Moreover, geography influenced culture. Judah in the south was relatively isolated; Israel was more open to foreign trade and other contacts and thus more cosmopolitan. Israel's land was more fertile than the hill country of Judah. In such an environment, the cults of the Canaanite gods flourish. The earlier Northern prophets Elijah and Elisha opposed the prophets and priests of Baal. At the heart of the conflict were two questions: 'Who makes the land fertile, Yahweh or Baal? Is it possible to give loyalty to more than one deity? On these questions, the earlier prophets had been unambiguous, insisting on singleness of devotion to Yahweh, who alone makes the land fertile. In spite of the apparent victory of those earlier prophets, Canaanite religion was alive in both subtle and explicit ways in Israel a century later, constituting one of the major problems that Hosea addressed.¹²

b. THE WORLD OF THE TEXT

i. LOCATION

As mentioned, Hosea is the only writing prophet who was a native of the northern kingdom of Israel. Throughout the book, attention is focused on Samaria, Bethel, and Shechem, the political and cultic centers of Israel. Hosea also shares certain theological concerns with other northern prophets and literary traditions. Like Elijah who ministered in the northern kingdom in the days of King Ahab, Hosea is a fierce opponent of Baal worship and is insistent that Yahweh, not Baal, is the source of fertility, both personal and agricultural. Hosea also reflects on the stories of traditional heroes of the north such as Abraham (2:1), Jacob (12:4-5, 13), and Moses (12:14). These are the same heroes favored by the Elohist, a literary source from the northern kingdom. Hosea also shares with northerners a certain reserve about the monarchy. Yahweh says, "They made kings, but not through me; they set up princes, but without my knowledge. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction" (Hos 8:4; see also 3:4; 5:1; 7:3-7; 8:10; 10:15; 13:9-11). Though Hosea

is from the north, he recognizes the legitimacy of the House of David as rightful rulers and of Jerusalem as the place of legitimate worship (3:5). It is possible that Hosea was living in the southern kingdom when he wrote his words to the kingdom in the north,¹³ according to Thomas L. Leclerc.

ii. DATE

The superscription of the book dates it in the time of Uzziah and Jeroboam II, suggesting that Hosea may have been contemporary with Amos, but adds the names of three more kings of Judah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, certain evidence that Hosea 1:1 is part of a Judean edition of the book. Unlike Amos, Hosea makes frequent references to Assyria, and the condemnations of kings and princes that appear in the book show that much of it is appropriately dated during the chaotic years after Jeroboam's death (745 B.C.E.). The book shows no awareness of the fall of the capital city Samaria (722/21). The commentaries on Hosea suggest that the material in the book may be arranged roughly in chronological order, and attempt to associate certain oracles with events known from 2 Kings and the Assyrian records, perhaps with a fair degree of success. It will be enough to be aware that the turmoil in the book is a reflection of the troubles afflicting Israel during this twenty to thirty-year period.¹⁴

iii. AUTHOR

As mentioned in earlier sections, Hosea lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during a time of rapid decline and political unrest. He began his ministry in the last days of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.E.) and his final prophecy (13:16) anticipates the fall of Samaria that occurred in 722. His ministry began in a time of stability and prosperity and ended in a time of chaos and impending doom.¹⁵ Some of the proclamations contained in the book of Hosea are associated with the Syro-Ephraimite War and the ensuing events of Tiglathpileser III. Hosea uses an excess of imagery and metaphorical language to depict this complex historical and social event.¹⁶ When Hosea spoke about God and people, he was using the metaphor of husband and wife to draw upon his own stormy marital experiences with Gomer (Hosea 1-3). As we will see in the study to follow, Hosea uses the imagery of a parent and a child or a parent and children as a metaphorical description of God relationships with Israel. What would lead him to use this imagery? Hosea had two sons and a daughter. If the children were born at the earliest part of his prophetic work, and if this material comes from the middle years of King Hoshea or around 727 B.C., this would mean that Hosea's children were just beyond their teen-age years. It would seem reasonable to assume that for a time the prophet functioned as a single parent. In any case, parenting seems to

have made an impression on Hosea; 11:3-4 recalls the time when the children were learning to walk. Did Hosea experience rebellion or ingratitude from his children? Absolutely, as most parents would respond. Would such experiences have suggested the imagery of verses 2 or 3? Hosea's experience with Gomer provided the ingredients for the husband and wife imagery, which suggests that the imagery here is drawn from experiences with the prophet's own children.¹⁷

As the study to follow presents, the poem is extraordinarily personal and intimate. Hosea portrays God's relationship to Israel that is not motivated simply out of covenant partnership but out of love analogous to the human love of a parent that goes beyond the obligations of covenant.

III. CONTEXT

a. IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

Chapters 9-10 which immediately precedes chapter 11 features the sins and wickedness of Israel. Chapter 11 connects with its predecessor by continuing these same themes but by way of contrast. God resumes speaking in chapter 11, but shifts to the metaphor of parent and child rather than husband and wife to describe the relationship with Israel. The passage clearly builds upon the motif of Israel's impending destruction from the previous pericope. The passage presents a more or less coherent whole. It begins with a historical retrospect which is perhaps more intense than those of preceding sections. References to earlier oracles of previous chapters may be detected in vv. 2, 4, 5, 7 and 11. In particular the themes of the chapter may be styled: vv. 1-4, Yahweh's consistent love is confronted by Ephraim's ingratitude; vv. 5f, Assyrian dominance and invasion is the inevitable consequence of the nation's ungrateful foolishness; v. 7, the nation's foolishness has robbed it of any potential for a satisfactory response; vv. 8f, Yahweh's gracious intervention and his decision to show unmerited compassion; vv. 10f, originally an indication that Yahweh's decision would have, as its result, miraculous freedom of the nation from involvement with Egypt and Assyria and its restoration to the land; this theme is later reworked to constitute a full (Judaean) statement of Yahweh's redemption of the Israelites in exile.¹⁸

At a first glance, chapter 11 has no particular connection to what followed it (chapter 12). However, it develops the theme of the rejection of prophetic proclamation which is the bitter offense (12:14) of Ephraim. 11:12-12:9 is the root of rejection; Israel is charged with lies and deceit before God (v. 12), the characteristic of Ephraim in all its dealings.¹⁹ Most of the rest of the chapter serves as examples of this lying and deceitful behavior.²⁰ In addition to the deceitful business practice of using false balances (fraudulent weights and measures; see Lev

19:35-36; Prov 11:1; 20:23), there is an obvious play on words, as well, since the term trader here is "Canaan" (12:7). Ephraim (12:8) so thoroughly mixes himself with the peoples (6:8) that he is indistinguishable in character from those around him.²¹

b. LARGER CONTEXT

The book of Hosea is built around the familial relationships, which is used as a metaphor for the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. Hosea makes the theme of hope and restoration an integral part of the total prophetic message rather than an editorial add-on. The image of God Hosea presents is entirely personal, a God caught between compassion for the people of the covenant and outrage at their infidelity. This more personal portrayal of God is captured in the dual images Hosea develops for the relationship established by the covenant between God and Israel: God relates to Israel in familial relationships both as a husband toward his wife (chapters 1-3) and as a loving father toward his children (chapter 11) that will be examined in the study to follow.²²

c. LARGEST CONTEXT

Hosea stands first among the prophets that are grouped together in the Book of the Twelve. They are often called the Minor Prophets because of their brevity compared to the large books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Hosea is placed first. He has some prominence because it is the longest of the twelve prophetic books, though the rest of the books are not ordered according to size. As the study to follow illustrate, its theme of God's relentless, redeeming love make it a favorite prophetic book for many and, perhaps, sets an underlying tone for all the prophetic words that follow, a backdrop against which to read all the harsh words of judgment that permeate most prophetic books.²³ Hosea makes many references to the history of Israel. Key names and places are mentioned to remind his listeners of their relationship with God in the past, to point out what has gone wrong, and to explain what plans God has for their future. Those who are not familiar with details of Old Testament history will need to be reminded of the events to which Hosea frequently alludes.²⁴ For example, in chapter 11, Hosea presents God as an anguished parent who has raised a rebellious child from infancy only to see it rebel when it is able to make its own choices. In order to present this image, it draws upon two major traditions in biblical literature in the Old Testament. The first is the motif of Israel's wandering in the wilderness following the Exodus from Egypt and the rebellions against God that take place during this period in which the people complain that they should return to Egypt when faced with difficulties in the wilderness, worship other gods, and

refuse to accept God's promises of security and land (Exod 12:37-39; 14:10-14; 16:1-3; 17:1-7; 32:1-35; Num 11:18-20; 14:1-25; 25:1-17). The second is the law pertaining to the rebellious son in Deut 21:18-21, which calls for the "stoning to death" of a son who refuses to accept the authority of his parents. In the end, God is unable to consign the rebellious child to death,²⁵ but his own beloved son Jesus Christ for the sake of our salvation.

IV. LITERARY ANALYSIS

a. FORM:

Hosea's prophecy is poetic. Hosea employs some devices of poetry, such as rhythm, symbolism and imagery throughout his book. Hosea's representation embodies significant feelings and facilitates human transformation at a fundamental level. Poetry in Hosea indeed plays a major role in his prophecy and theology.

b. STRUCTURE:

Most commentaries divide Chapter 11 of Hosea into four distinct sections:²⁶

1. Verses 1-4 portray the past of God and Israel as one of parent and child.
2. Verses 5-7 speak of Israel's present as marked by the consequences of rebellion.
3. Verses 8-9 speak of God's present, in which God refuses to give up on the rebellious child.
4. Verses 10-11 speak of a future for God and Israel when reunion and restoration can take place.²⁷

c. LITERARY TECHNIQUES:

Hosea employs various literary techniques within the passage that create a sense of unity and cohesiveness. It especially signifies the pericope's overall theological messages. Hosea (speaking for God) uses intense personal language of parenting to speak of divine love for Israel. The repeating technique emphasis on the tasks God has done as a parent by repeating the I-statements: "I loved . . . I called . . . I taught Ephraim to walk . . . I took them up in my arms . . . I healed . . . I led . . . I lifted them like infants to the cheek . . . I bent down . . . I fed."²⁸

In verse 1, Hosea uses metaphorical language of familial love, the parent and the child. This image provides not only literary richness but has theological and practical outcome. Hosea employs these images to project the potential return of Israel to God, and thereby presents the rhetorical goal of his oracles as expressed at the end of the book in Hos 14:29. Ironic Tension is detected in verse 2: "The more, I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols." The contrary lies within verse 2 with a paradoxical union of opposed processes, interchange between the positive and the negative. The divine care itself contributes to Israel's turning away.²⁹ Synonymous Parallelism is also found in verse 2. In verse 4, one may suggest that Hosea employs foreshadowing technique to prophesy Jesus "girded Himself" to wash the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5). In verse 5, the expression "return to Egypt" appears to have a double meaning (literary technique) here. : Some Israelites escaped to Egypt as refugees; however, "Egypt" is also a symbol for bondage.³⁰ In verse 8, Hosea employs rhetorical technique by a series of intense self-questioning. Four rhetorical questions suggest the fate that Israel's behavior deserves: the end of relationship, handed over to captivity, and totally destroyed like Admah and Zeboiim. But when God asks "Can I do or allow these things?" the rhetorical answer is "I cannot!"³¹ In verse 9, Hosea employs the anthropomorphic image of a God whose heart recoils within and whose compassion grows warm and tender. At the same time it declares that God is "no mortal" at all and thus it affirms that any depiction of God in human terms, however revelatory, is ultimately insufficient as a depiction of holiness itself "the Holy One".³² Synonymous Parallelism is also used in verse 9. In verse 10, Hosea employs a simile, depicting God as a metaphor of a roaring lion. Although such an image is well known from the natural world, it is politically significant as well in that the lion is the symbol of the tribe of Judah and its role as ruler of the other tribes (Gen 49:8-12; cf. Amos 1:2). It is possible that this statement reflects the prophet's location in Judah when the final form of the book was produced or perhaps some Judean sympathies on his part.³³ In verse 11, Hosea portrays Israel's future return to its land from exile; two similes "like birds from Egypt" and "like doves from the land of Assyria" are use in these two verses to describe the liberation and the pace by which this future return will occur.

V. EXEGESIS

Hosea 11 is one of the highlight of the Old Testament revelation of God's nature³⁴; it demonstrates God's persevering love using a parable built on the metaphor of a parent's love for a rebellious child, a radical shift in mood and content from previous chapters. Though, the theme is developed in a similar way throughout

the book of Hosea: unfaithfulness and rebellion, punishment and restoration. Most commentaries divide the pericope into four sections like a four-act drama in which Hosea is the only actor, speaking for God.³⁵

a. VERSE BY VERSE ANALYSIS

1. ACT 1, VERSES 1-4 DESCRIBE THE TENDER LOVE OF GOD FOR ISRAEL IN SPITE OF THEIR SIN:³⁶ Professor Carol Dempsey O.P. illustrates this passage as “a glimpse into the heart-warming, heart-wrenching relationship that God has with Israel ... despite Israel's lack of appreciation of the gift.”³⁷ In this episode, Hosea moves to a compelling metaphor for relationship between God and Israel; it is the metaphor of parent and child (v. 1).³⁸ God uses the intense personal language of parenting to speak of divine love for the child, Israel. The emphasis is on what God has done as a parent. The language is dominated by direct, personal I-statements: "I loved . . . I called . . . I taught Ephraim to walk . . . I took them up in my arms . . . I healed . . . I led . . . I lifted them like infants to the cheek . . . I bent down . . . I fed."³⁹ Yet the child is ungrateful, not acknowledging the parent's care and in fact rebelling (v. 2). Later on, God will be described as the "Holy One" with emphasis on God's transcendence (v. 9). But the emphasis here is on the Lord's condescension. God is like a parent patiently teaching a child to walk. This section ends with a picture of the humbling Lord who "bends down" to care for his own child.⁴⁰ This prophecy of a humbling Jesus acting like an Israel slave who washes the disciples' feet to reveal God's love (John 13:4-5).

Verse 1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son”: As mentioned, Hosea's chapter 11 begins with a parent-child relationship (v. 1). This relationship began with Israel as a child, in the infancy of Israel existence in Egypt where Joseph and his brothers settled. Their families flourished into a nation, and were built into a cohesive unit by the persecution they started to experience as their numbers grew larger. Their persecuted captives necessitate God deliverance through Moses. It was through this exodus experience, that Israel was "called." The verb "called" (used again in v. 2) indicates that Israel's bond is not so much a matter of biology but as a matter of divine initiative. God chooses to make Israel God's child. Some scholars have used the language of adoption for this. The motive for God's deliverance of Israel “out of Egypt” and God's calling of Israel as a child is clearly the proof of God's love toward Israel. Two key words in this verse are very important for portraying God's attitude toward Israel: "love" and "call." Because God loves, God calls. It is the natural next step for the lover to call the beloved, Israel. No reasons but love are given why God should feel that way about Israel.⁴¹

According to Marvin A. Sweeney and David W. Cotter, in Hebrew, the translation of "child" is more properly described as a "youth" or adolescent who is more prone to rebel against a parent. God states, "I loved him, and I called him from Egypt for/as my son" and thereby sets the stages for the situation envisioned in the law concerning the rebellious son.⁴²

Verse 2 "The more, I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols": The statement of God's love and calling out of Egypt is followed in verse 2 by the statement of Israel's rebellion. A parent who has expended the love, time, and energy to raise a young child would hope for a loving response, but it is not automatic that even the most loved of children will reciprocate a parent's love; it was certainly not the case between God and Israel. The metaphor of parent and child allows for the possibility that a child, who cannot forever be controlled by the parent, will break away, rebel, make bad choices.⁴³ The more God desired the relationship as parent to the child, the more Israel rejected God in favor of idolatry, particularly with the Baals. The sense of the verse is of a continuing process of separation. God continues to call, but Israel continues to turn to other gods, and other idols⁴⁴ which call to mind both the worship of the golden calf in the wilderness (Ex. 32) and the apostasy to Baal at Baal Peor (Numbers 25).⁴⁵ This allegory is analogous to the other dominant metaphor in Hosea where they were seduced by false lovers and abandoned their true husband. After acknowledging their betrayal, God does not lash out in anger. Such reactions do occur often in the biblical prophets, including Hosea, where God's wrath is roused against the people because of their sin.⁴⁶

Verse 3 "Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not, know that I healed them": Verse 3 is remarkable for the pathos of God's response. It is not the angry God who responds to rejection with wrath. It is the wounded God, a lamented parent who responds by recalling with tenderness the care that God had given Israel, the child. This is not the lofty, transcendent God of power. Portrayed here is a God of intimate relationship, involved from Israel's infancy in nurturing and enabling its life.⁴⁷ The actions are maternal, tender and loving; God taught them to walk patiently as a mother directing a child how to lift and lay its feet, and supporting it with her arms. God healed them without thought to acknowledgment: "they did not know" (v. 3b).⁴⁸ A parent ministers to the injuries of the child, much as God does so by God's healing power. "Healer" is one of the most striking feminine images of God in the Hebrew Scriptures according to Carroll Stuhlmueller.⁴⁹ Israel's response was however, persistent rebellion and ingratitude.⁵⁰

Verse 4 "I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them": With more evidence of the

parental love, God led Israel, and the leading was out of kindness and love (v. 4a). According to Biblical scholars, verse 4b is difficult to translate, but the NRSV rendering fits well with the portrait of parental tenderness. God lifts them like an infant to the cheek, humbling Godself by bending down to attend to their needs;⁵¹ while NIV has followed a different alternative that changes the image from a child to a beast of burden "I lifted the yoke from their neck."⁵² This passage has no parallel for its portrait of divine tenderness, care, and love. By the same token, coming immediately after the statement in verse 2 of Israel's continuous rebellion, the effect is to portray divine woundedness, the God whose tender love has been rejected.⁵³

2. ACT 2, VERSES 5-7 DESCRIBE GOD'S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL'S APOSTASY IN THE IMMEDIATE HORIZON BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO RETURN TO GOD AND ABANDON THEIR EVIL WAYS.⁵⁴ This episode shifts the poem's focus and tone (v 6).⁵⁵ The return to Egypt is ironic in light of the deliverance from Egypt that established God's love for Israel (v. 1). Several times in Hosea, particularly after the Assyrian invasion of 733 in which much land was seized and some were sent into exile, it is stated that many will be removed from their land either to Egypt or Assyria. Some will flee to Egypt as refugees. Others will be forced to go to Assyria as exiles. (See 7:11; 8:8-9; 9:3, 6.)⁵⁶

Verse 5 "They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me": From tender beginnings, the text turns abruptly to tragic present. Israel has refused to return to God (v. 5b). Instead they have brought themselves into desperate circumstances that will bring a return to Egypt and a submission to Assyrian rule (v. 5a).⁵⁷ The tone is that of accusation (v. 5c) and announcement of punishment (v. 5ab). As mentioned earlier, the expression "return to Egypt" appears to have a double meaning here. As a result of the Assyrian conquests, some citizens of Israel did flee to Egypt as refugees. In the context of the whole chapter, however, "Egypt" is also a symbol for bondage. Just as the people had once been in Egypt in the time of Moses (v. 1); so they would experience another captivity, this time in Assyria.⁵⁸ It is a theme that Hosea uses often to indicate the coming judgment against Israel (7:16; 8:13; 9:6). The threat of Assyrian rule has shadowed Israel's life for much of Hosea's ministry.⁵⁹

Verse 6 "The sword rages in their cities, it consumes their oracle-priests, and devours because of their schemes": Verse 6 seems to indicate that the violence of the Assyrian sword is already being felt in the land, perhaps reflecting the bitter Assyrian invasion of 733 B.C. that took most of the land by sword. At that time, many fled as refugees to Egypt while many others were forced to submit to Assyrian rule. The double bondage to Egypt and Assyria of verse 5a is not just Hosea's vision for the future but also a present reality

already happening to Israel.⁶⁰ Verse 6 also provides another glimpse of Hosea's dislike for priests. They will be consumed because of their part in leading Israel astray, especially because of their destructive advice given through lying oracles.⁶¹ The repetition of the verb "consumes" or "devours" in verse 6 emphasizes the contrast between the Lord's past blessings and future judgment. In the past God had given Israel food to eat (consume). Now God was about to send Assyrian swords to consume or devour Israel.⁶²

Verse 7 "My people are bent on turning away from me. To the Most High they call, but he does not raise them up at all": Yet, the people remain stubbornly "bent on turning away from me" (v. 7a). They call on the "Most High" (probably refer to some deity other than the Lord⁶³; some scholars with a slight alteration of the text read "Baal" here), but no false god can save them (v. 7b).⁶⁴ According to Carroll Stuhlmueller, the Hebrew verse 7 should read: "My people are in suspense about returning to me"; the second line of verse 7 is almost unintelligible in the Hebrew and is variously reconstructed.⁶⁵

3. ACT 3, VERSES 8-9, GOD REFUSES TO GIVE UP ON ISRAEL: verse 8-9 reveal God's agonizing about Israel's fate and God's refusal to give up on the one who has been so loved.⁶⁶ God is heard to express doubts, to question his decision, and even to have a change of heart, deciding not to act on the basis of his legitimate anger.⁶⁷ Punishment is not God's last word. A startling anthropomorphism presents God so moved that he addresses his people in emotional terms of the lament.⁶⁸ According to Professor Carol Dempsey, O.P., verse 8c provides a preview of God's deepest feelings. Because of God's recoiling heart and warm and tender compassion, God cannot destroy or chastise God beloved people (v 9a). This episode ends with a divine self-confession: "for I am God and no mortal ... and I will not come in wrath" (v 9b).⁶⁹

Verse 8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender": God agonizes in verses 8-9 crying out the inability to give up the rebellious child Israel for punishment as required by the law concerning a rebellious son in Deut 21:18-21. According to Marvin A. Sweeney and David W. Cotter, many interpreters fail to consider that this was very likely a common reaction among parents affected by the law of Deut 21:18-21, and they would pursue such action only in the most extreme cases. Hosea employs a sequence of rhetorical questions to express the reluctance to give Israel up.⁷⁰ To be sure, as is clear throughout the book of Hosea, Israel deserves harsh retribution for its terrible sins. No one could fault God's justice if the punishment is severe, even a complete breaking off of the relationship. But God is not only just; God is also merciful, loving, and forgiving. Each of the four questions begins with "How can I. . . ?"

God wonders how much discipline is necessary. To do nothing and ignore what Israel has done is not an option. Should God hand them over to the agents of punishment (to be killed or exiled to Assyria)? Should God destroy them as was done to Admah and Zeboiim, cities that were annihilated along with Sodom and Gomorrah? Admah and Zeboiim are the names used in northern traditions, while southern traditions referred to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:28; Isa 1:9-10). Both sets of names occur in Deut 29:22.⁷¹ By asking these "How can I?" questions, God implies an answer "I cannot do it." Though justice may demand punishment for the sake of good order and as warning for other potential offenders, God's internal inventory finds not the expected final execution of divine judgment. Instead God reports, "My heart recoils within me" (v. 8b).⁷² Here is a look inside God's heart. In Hebrew, the heart is more than emotion, passion, tender feeling, though all of these are ascribed to God in the pericope; the heart implies conscious thinking, understanding, making decisions, willing a certain outcome⁷³ and that is God's will to reject the execution of Israel's punishment.

Verse 9 "I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath": Verse 9 presents God not coming in wrath but rather, in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness (v 7)⁷⁴, acting in love like a human parent; God retains sovereign freedom and chooses to use that freedom for mercy.⁷⁵ God professes difference from humankind: the Holy One will not "come in wrath" (NRSV), "come against the cities" (NIV), or "let the flames consume you" (NAB). The driving here is clear: God renounces violence. A challenge to traditional Deuteronomy theology, v 9 makes clear that the unfaithful will not receive the punishment their unfaithfulness has warranted;⁷⁶ God, despite their offenses, refuses to end the relationship.⁷⁷ God's love will not go away. God will remain "in your midst" (v. 9c). God's love for Israel is greater than their sin.⁷⁸ Verse 9b also articulates two dimensions of the reality of God. God is the "Holy One," the transcendent dimension of God. At the same time, the Lord is the Holy One "in your midst." The transcendent God is also the God who condescends to be with God's people.⁷⁹

3. ACT 4, VERSES 10-11, REUNION, RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION IN THE FUTURE: God's unending love for Israel is emphasized in verses 10-11.⁸⁰ The future for God and Israel is the focus of verses 10-11. If the present has seen God and Israel, parent and child, on a divided path, then the divine speech through Hosea ends by envisioning a future of reunion. Home from "Egypt" (vv. 10-11), the story which began by recalling the deliverance of a "son" from Egypt now returns to that theme with the promise that the Lord's "sons" will be delivered from bondage in the future. Thus the story comes to its end: out of Egypt, back into "Egypt" because of rebellion; then out of "Egypt," back home again because of the Lord's compassion.⁸¹

Verse 10 “They shall go after the LORD, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west”: Verse 10 is somewhat mysterious. It is not direct address from God but speaks of God in the third person,⁸² in contrast with the rest of chapter 11. Its meaning is unclear. The Lord roars like a lion. God is likened to a lion in other places in Hosea as something fearsome rather than a source of help to which people could go. If verse 10 is meant as a reassuring word, one wonders what the function of the lion is.⁸³ The reference to roaring lions is typical of Amos, not of Hosea (Amos 1:2, 3:4, 8).⁸⁴ Further, it is uncertain what is the departure point of the people who "come trembling from the west." Where were they before they begin their journey back home to Israel? Could it be Egypt? Many scholars believe this verse is a later Judean addition to the speech. Arguments about what to do with this verse are inconclusive.⁸⁵

Verse 11 “They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD”: Verse 11 provides a ray of hope during the painful years of exile. Egypt and Assyria remain part of the fate Israel has chosen in its sin. Israel will be required to walk through that difficult ordeal. But Israel's sin will not end the relationship because God's love will not allow it,⁸⁶ and God's divine power will enable Israel's return from Egypt and Assyria, reversing the exile implied in verse 5. It seems very much in character with Hosea, using the image of trembling birds and doves to picture the anxious, tentative return of Israel. But the ending is clear. In a final, first-person declaration, God declares, "I will return them to their homes." God brings them home to the land, to the relationship. The child will return.⁸⁷

In conclusion, as Professor Carol Dempsey, O.P. put it: “Hos 11:1-11 conveys a very human and divine image of God, but one that is not without its flaws. Central to the passage is the language of relationship, the language of a vacillating heart that moves back and forth from care to frustration to care and compassion with the promise of future restoration. The passage depicts a loving God whose love transcends human love and who will not harm the beloved.”⁸⁸

VI. HERMENEUTICS

a. DECONSTRUCTION

A few points within the pericope can be considered problematic. The gendered issue exhibits in verse 1, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” The text gives a preference for the male gender as beloved while ignoring female. Is the male to be preferred? The language of the text could legitimately support a gender bias both ancient and modern.⁸⁹ This is in contrast with St. Paul’s teaching in his

pastoral letter, Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

In verse 6, God is described as a destructor or retaliator: "The sword rages in their cities, it consumes their oracle-priests, and devours" This characterizes God as warrior or punisher, rather than the divine or tender lover. This is in contrast to God's steadfast love as portrait throughout the passage. The representation of a devastating image in verse 6 could be a justification for modern day violence, contradicting the compassionate God throughout the Bible.

The androcentric view of God in verse 10 is problematic. "They shall go after the LORD, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west." This androcentric depiction of God substantiates a problem because God's transcendence is beyond an anthropocentric description. Moreover, an androcentric description of God as a father is limiting to a proper understanding and relationship with an all encompassing God. Hosea depicts God as a fierce father and the Israelites as children trembling at their father's gesture. This is an example of the exercise of power where God behaves like a "lion" frightening the people of Israel. This passage continue to be prophetic insofar as they speak to a world that continues to struggle over issues of power, its use and abuse, a world challenged to take to heart this message of Hosea.⁹⁰ This father-child description also reminiscences similar imagery that appeared earlier in the poem, but for modern readers, it suggests a patriarchal and paternalistic relationship, one that betrays religious and cultural attitudes present in Israelite society during the eighth century B.C.E. and later.⁹¹

b. RETRIEVAL

Despite some problems as a result of cultural and social conditioned, chapter 11 is probably the best-known passage for most memorable picture of God's persevering love in the whole book of Hosea; a love so strong that it continues despite rebellion. This chapter gives a look into the heart of God. Parents who have had problems with their own children can sense something of God's anguish by identifying with God's words. They can begin to grasp the concept of a God who also suffers because of the sins of his children. As a parent, God is forced to punish for the sake of discipline, but God does not want to do that and is eager to look beyond the necessity of punishment to a time of reconciliation and renewal. This is the other significant family metaphor (in addition to husband and wife) used eloquently by Hosea. This metaphor is much less problematic for many than the imagery of marriage and adultery that dominates chapters 1-3 and appears occasionally elsewhere.⁹²

Scholars have been discussing whether the parent in this metaphor is a father or a mother. The Hebrew language (as in English) does not distinguish the gender of the first-person (I) that is repeated several times in verses 1-4 to express the tasks of a good parent. This had commonly been assumed to be a father since male imagery for God dominates in the Bible and tradition. The parental activities named by God seem to belong to both fathers and mothers, though some are more commonly ascribed to one than the other: loving, calling, teaching to walk, picking up and holding, healing, lifting to the cheek, bending down, and feeding them. In Israelite families, the fathers were the heads of households, but the mothers were the child-rearers. Traditional Vietnamese families are also adhered to this ancestral model. Hosea combines the work of nurturing by both loving parents⁹³ that is very well balanced.

c. RECONSTRUCTION

To address some of the problems listed in the passages, the text can be reconstructed as follows: The gender issue in verse 1 could have been avoided by changing the word “him” and “son” to non-gendered language, for example: “When the Israelites were youngsters, I loved them, and out of Egypt I called my children.” The language of the reconstructed text is inclusive and gives no gender bias; its original meaning is still preserved.

The tone in verse 6 can be softening by altering the text: “Their cities are in chaos and the conspiracies of their oracle-priests are uncovered.” This hermeneutic task, however, violates the contextual integrity of Hosea’s passage. Thus the problem with this text can not easily be fixed while preserving its original meaning.

The issue of androcentricism in verse 10 can be tackled by merely removing this verse. As discussed earlier in section V.a.3., there are a few peculiarities with verse 10. It is not direct address from God but speaks of God in the third person, in contrast with the rest of chapter 11. Its meaning is ambiguous. Many scholars have questioned whether this verse is from Hosea or is a later addition. Arguments about what to do with this verse are inconclusive.⁹⁴ Thus removing of verse 10 would not change the context of the pericope and would solve the problem that the language presents.

VII. THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In a heartbreaking description of God's parental love for Israel, Hosea indicted the "prodigal son" (Israel) for breaking the covenant by sacrificing to idols (v. 1-2). This chapter contains one of the Old Testament's most inspirational teachings about the steadfast nature of God's love.⁹⁵ The passage draws from the intuitive hope deep within the heart of Hosea, like an island whose roots extend beneath the river currents.⁹⁶

Hosea 11 stresses that God loved the child before Israel knew how to respond as in 1 John 4:7-11. When Matthew sees the fulfillment of this line in Jesus' infancy, Hosea's prophecy enables us to recognize the Passover mystery in Jesus: through the Red Sea, across the wilderness, toward new life (Matt 2:15). "Israel as my firstborn child" was already revealed to Moses (Exod 4:22-23); here it is reaffirmed with stronger personal bonds.⁹⁷

The great sin of Israel, according to Hosea, is idolatry. There is only one God who should command the loyalty of the people. Whenever some other person, ideal, activity, material object, or divine symbol becomes the center of one's life, that is idolatry and it will lead to terrible consequences. Only the Lord God is worthy of the supreme place in our life. The Lord is the only one whose opinion matters, the only one with the power to help, the only one who has created and sustained the covenant people, the only one who can promise a future with hope. To turn anywhere else for what only God can give is utter idiocy and very dangerous.⁹⁸ Each generation of believers will ask what idolatry is in its own day. How does Hosea's attack on idolatry relate to their time and place? It may be much more subtle than outward religious practices, though, in some forms, the ancient fertility religion of Canaan has not disappeared from the scene. In a list of idolatries for the twenty-first century, accommodations to the culture, materialism, and nationalism could be included, along with many other things.⁹⁹

Hosea is particularly critical of the priests who have failed in their duty to instruct the people and to pass on the knowledge of God to present and future generations (see 11:6, 4:4-6). In the early twenty-first century, many people claim to be spiritual but have little connection to a religious community or much content to their beliefs. Even in many churches, there is much ignorance of what is in the Bible and little discussion of difficult theological and ethical issues. A religious community that does not know its own history and traditions has no solid basis by which to evaluate the multitude of spiritual options available in the present. If Hosea were to appear, he would no doubt wonder why people are so ignorant about their own beliefs, why they have no knowledge of God. And, as he did so many years ago, he would question who was at fault, who had failed in their responsibility. Then it was the priests who were the special object of his critique. Who would he blame

today, ordained clergy, indifferent laity, busy and harassed parents, a secular society, schools, government, court decisions? One thing is certain; he would not be silent.¹⁰⁰

Can Forgiveness Remove the Consequences of Sin? Hosea makes clear that even though God longs to forgive (ch. 11 and elsewhere), the consequences of wrongdoing cannot be stopped. Thus God speaks of a tender love for Israel, but not removal of the punishment. There is hope for a future after the Assyrian exile (v.11), but the forces of history cannot be altered magically by the act of forgiveness. Israel's sin is documented from the time of their entry into the promised land. As a result, many events have led up to the time when Assyria stands at the threshold ready to devour the nation. Even if God forgives, before the people repent, the Assyrians are still coming. Forgiveness is real. It can change lives. It can lead to a brighter future, but it cannot change the past. This is true in individual lives as well as the history of nations.¹⁰¹

God's Control and Human Freedom: God is in control of the events of history. Yet, God cannot keep a husband or a wife from infidelity, leaving to go after other lovers or prevent a child from making tragic, self-destructive decisions. Apparently, humans have freedom to rebel against God, to deny their commitments, to abandon their heritage. Further, Assyrians do not understand their imperial conquests to be part of some plan originating with the God of the Hebrews. They invade, conquer, kill, plunder, and take exiles because they have the power to do it. "If your god wants us to punish you, we'll be happy to oblige." Who is in charge? Who is to blame for the destruction of the nation of Israel? Hosea says it is the people. They brought it on themselves. Hosea also says that it is God who uses Assyria as an instrument of punishment. Assyria thinks they are acting on their own. Somehow, all of these statements about assigning responsibility are true, even though believers like to think that God micromanages all that happens, big events and small, good things and bad that come to individuals or larger communities or nations.¹⁰²

It is easy to state that God did this because someone did that. It might make what's happened logical, but it does a great disservice to God. It makes God look like a punishing, cruel God rather than a God of mercy. An example serves to illustrate. It was easy to say that the terrorism perpetrated on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 was God's punishment against us for our arrogance and abuse of power. We would not like it much, but it has been said. And in a culture with a mindset that believes "good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people," it's the obvious conclusion.¹⁰³ This reminded me of a response by Rev. Dr. Peter Phan of Georgetown University that is when people wonder where God is in a war. He suggested that God is on the battlefield, taking all of the bullets into God's own body. There is no pain that God does not feel. God may not always seem present in the midst of life's chaos and brokenness,

but Hosea serves to remind us that God is never exempt from the pain. When we cause pain to others, God is there, feeling that pain; when others cause us pain, God is there as well. God is always there in our midst. The interaction of God's sovereignty and human freedom is a very complex subject that has occupied theologians for centuries. Somehow, as in Hosea, all the participants, divine and human, have a say in the way events will evolve. The hope that sustains believers is that God will have the last word and God's love will prevail!¹⁰⁴

VIII. CONCLUSION

This chapter is widely regarded as one of the most moving and eloquent chapters in all prophetic literature. It presents a remarkable portrait of God as a loving parent in relationship to Israel as a rebellious child. The language is unusually personal and intimate. In Hosea's portrayal, God's relationship to Israel is not motivated simply out of covenant partnership but out of hope and love. It is not simply the "steadfast love" of covenant that is important to Hosea's message, but love analogous to the human love of a parent that goes beyond the obligations of covenant. As far as it can be known, Hosea is the earliest instance in the Old Testament where God's relation to Israel is based on love. The book of Deuteronomy also makes love a major theme in God's relationship with Israel. Love comes prior to any covenantal agreements with specified stipulations for both parties (God and human), before the issuing of laws with their promise of rewards or punishment for obedience or disobedience. The New Testament, especially the Johannine writings, put a strong emphasis on the primacy of God's love: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but has eternal life" (John 3:16).¹⁰⁵ Today, even though we may have rebelled and rejected God, God continues to love us. If God allows punishments to come, we can have confidence that such trials are not vindictive; they are intended to be restorative and healing. Though we may go astray, we can have confidence that God wants to restore God's parental relationship and God's blessings. This is a message for us as believers and especially for those who despair that they have lost their love, neglected the faith or fallen back into the captivity of sin.¹⁰⁶

END NOTES:

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⁶ Jeffrey S. Rogers, "Hosea," in the *The Mercer Commentary on The Bible*. edited by Watson E. Mills, Richard F. Wilson (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 235.

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¹² Dennis J. McCarthy, S.J. and Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., "Hosea," in the *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Richard J. Clifford, S.J., Joseph . A. Fitzmeyer, S.J. and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1990), 218.

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¹⁵ Simundson, "*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*", 5.

¹⁶ Dempsey, "*The Prophets A Liberation-Critical Reading*" 153.

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¹⁸ A. A. Macintosh, B.D., "*Hosea A Critical And Exegetical Commentary*" (Cambridge: Page Brothers, 1997), 436.

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²⁴ Ibid., 2.

²⁵ Marvin A. Sweeney and David W. Cotter, O.S.B., "The Twelve Prophets Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah," Ed. Jerome T. Walsh, Chris Franke, (Collegeville, Minnesota: THE LITURGICAL PRESS, 2000), 113.

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- ⁴⁹ Stuhlmüller, C.P., "Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk", 55.
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⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Simundson, “*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*”, 84.

⁶² Woods, “The Use of Hosea 11:1 In Matthew 2:15”,

<http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/documents/articles/11/11.pdf>

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⁶³ Simundson, “*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*”, 84.

⁶⁴ Birch, “*Hosea, Joel, and Amos*”, 99.

⁶⁵ Stuhlmüller, C.P., “Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk”, 55.

⁶⁶ Simundson, “*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*”, 84.

⁶⁷ Gene M. Tucker, “*Hosea*,” in *HarperCollins Bible Commentary*, ed. James L. Mays (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2000), 638

⁶⁸ Dennis J. McCarthy, S.J. and Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., “*Hosea*,” in the *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Richard J. Clifford, S.J., Joseph . A. Fitzmeyer, S.J. and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1990), 236.

⁶⁹ Dempsey, “*The Prophets A Liberation-Critical Reading*”, 157.

⁷⁰ Sweeney and Cotter, O.S.B., “The Twelve Prophets Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah,” Ed. Jerome T. Walsh, Chris Franke, 115.

⁷¹ Stuhlmüller, C.P., Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, 56.

⁷² Birch, “*Hosea, Joel, and Amos*”, 100.

⁷³ Simundson, “*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*”, 84.

⁷⁴ Dempsey, “*The Prophets A Liberation-Critical Reading*”, 158.

⁷⁵ Birch, “*Hosea, Joel, and Amos*”, 100.

⁷⁶ Simundson, “*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*”, 87.

⁷⁷ Dempsey, “*The Prophets A Liberation-Critical Reading*”, 158.

⁷⁸ Simundson, “Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets”, 87.

⁷⁹ Limburg, “Hosea Micah, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching”, 41.

⁸⁰ Simundson, “Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets”, 88.

⁸¹ Limburg, “Hosea Micah, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching”, 40.

⁸² Stuhlmüller, C.P., “Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk”, 56.

⁸³ Simundson, “*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets*”, 88.

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⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁸⁸ Dempsey, “*The Prophets A Liberation-Critical Reading*”, 158.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁹² Simundson, “Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets”, 84.

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⁹⁵ Philip J. King, “*Amos, Hosea, Micah - An Archaeological Commentary*” (New Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988), 95.

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⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 90.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰² Ibid., 96.

¹⁰³ leavenworthchristian, <http://leavenworthchristian.com/pdf/aug5.pdf> (March 15, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ Simundson, "Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: Minor Prophets", 96.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 84.

¹⁰⁶ Morrison , "A companion article: The use of history in Hosea 12", <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/OT/hosea11.htm>
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