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HOSEA 1: 1 the LORD's word that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

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Hosea, the son of Beeri, is the first of the minor prophets. Epiphanius says that he was of the town of Belemoth, in the tribe of Issachar; which is no other, in all probability, than Beelmeon, towards Esdraelon, in this tribe. The rabbins say that Bura was his father, who is mentioned in the Chronicles, and was prince of the tribe of Reuben at the time when Tiglath-pileser carried some of the tribes of Israel into captivity. But if it be so, Hosea must be said to be of the tribe of Reuben; and a native of Beelmeon, beyond Jordan. This prophet lived in the kingdom of Samaria; and his prophecies for the most part have a view to this state, though there are likewise some particular things which concern the kingdom of Judah.

We read, in the introduction to his prophecy, that he prophesied under the kings of Judah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and under Jeroboam II., king of Israel. If he prophesied in the reign of all these princes, he must have lived a very long time; for there are a hundred and twelve years from the beginning of Uzziah's reign to the end of Hezekiah's reign. Uzziah began to reign A.M. 3194, and Hezekiah's reign ended in 3306. Add, if you please, twenty or five and twenty years, which might be the age of Hosea when he began to prophesy; and this will make one hundred and thirty-two, or one hundred and thirty-seven years. And if we were to take ten years from Uzziah, and as many from Hezekiah, during which Hosea might not have prophesied, there will still remain one hundred and twelve, or one hundred and fifteen years.

In the whole collection of Hosea's prophecies, we find nothing which proves that he prophesied so long. And, besides, why should his prophecies be dated in the title by the reigns of the kings of Judah, when he did not live under their dominion? It is therefore very probable that this title is not Hosea's, but some ancient transcriber's; and that the true beginning of this prophet's work is at these words: "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea." It is our opinion that he began about the end of Jeroboam's reign, who was the second king of Israel of this name. See Calmet.

St. Jerome and many others believe Hosea to be the oldest prophet, whose writings are in our possession; and that he was witness to the first captivity of the four tribes carried away by Tiglath-pileser, and the extinction of the kingdom of Samaria by Shalmaneser. St. Jerome will have it that he prophesied even afterwards. The first verses of 1: have a view to the death of Zechariah, king of Israel, and son of Jeroboam II: From the sixth verse of the first chapter to the third chapter, is a prediction of the captivity of Israel: but after he has foretold this captivity, he declares the return and end of it. He inveighs strongly against the disorders which prevailed in the kingdom of the ten tribes. It appears that in his time there were idols; not only at Dan, Beth-el, and Samaria, but likewise at Gilgal, upon Tabor, at Sichem, Beer-sheba, and upon the mountains of Gilead. He speaks of the Israelites as of a people entirely corrupted, and the measure of whose sins was filled up; he foretells that their golden calves should be pulled down, cast upon the ground, and carried into Assyria.

He reflects, with the same severity, upon the irregularities which reigned in Judah. He stands up against those who went to worship false gods at Gilgal. He speaks of Sennacherib's invading the territories of Judah. He foretells that the people of Judah should still continue some time in their country after the captivity of the ten tribes; but that after this they themselves should likewise be carried captives beyond the Euphrates, from whence the Lord would bring them back after a certain number of years. The style of Hosea is obscure, and his expressions often dubious and perplexed.

The things whereof he speaks contribute farther to his obscurity, by reason of their distance, and our ignorance of the history of those times.

In the beginning of Hosea's prophecy, we read that the Lord directed him "to take unto him a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms;" that is, to marry a woman who, before her marriages had lived a debauched life, but who, after her marriage, should retire from all bad conversation, and whose children should be legitimate, notwithstanding that, by reason of the blemish which their mother had contracted by her former life, they were called the children of whoredoms. This prostitute woman, and the children who were to be born of her, were a figure and a kind of real prophecy which described the idolatry and infidelity of Samaria and the ten tribes, formerly the Lord's spouse, but who afterwards became idolatrous and corrupt.

The children of this faithless woman are children of prostitution, since they imitate the idolatry of their mother. God gives these children the names of Jezreel, God will disperse; Lo-rechamah, or Without mercy; and Lo-ammi, Thou art no longer my people; to show, -

1. That God was going to revenge upon the house of Jehu, king of Israel, the sins which he had committed at Jezreel, when he usurped the kingdom of the ten tribes.
2. That the Lord would treat his idolatrous and sinful people without mercy.
3. That he would reject them, and no more look upon them as his people.

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.

Like many of the Hebrew prophets, he tempers denunciations of God's vengeance against an idolatrous and vicious people, with promises of abundant mercies in store for them; and his transitions from one of these subjects to the other are rapid and unexpected. He abounds with short and lively comparisons; and, like the best Greek and Roman writers, often omits the particle of similitude. These comparisons he sometimes accumulates in the spirit of that poetry which is most admired. See Hos 6:3, Hos 6:4; Hos 9:10; Hos 11:11; Hos 13:3; Hos 14:5-7. He has often a Great Force of Expression. See Hos 1:7; Hos 2:3, Hos 2:18, Hos 2:21, Hos 2:22; Hos 4:2; Hos 6:5; Hos 11:4; Hos 12:1. He is sometimes Highly Animated. See Hos 4:14; Hos 5:8; Hos 8:1; Hos 9:5, Hos 9:14; Hos 13:10, Hos 13:14. Many Beautiful Passages occur in this prophet, as in the Similes throughout; in the Allegories, Hos 2:2, Hos 2:20; Hos 7:11, Hos 7:12, Hos 8:7; Hos 10:11, Hos 10:12, Hos 10:13; Hos 13:15; in the Pathos, Hos 11:3; and Hos 11:8, Hos 11:9; in the Figures, Hos 13:12; Hos 14:2. There are also some parts which are truly Sublime, as Hos 5:14, Hos 5:15; Hos 8:7; Hos 10:8; Hos 13:7, Hos 13:8.

I have already, at the beginning of Isaiah, given a table of the chronological succession of all the prophets: that of Archbishop Newcome on the twelve minor prophets I subjoin here, because it contains some differences from the preceding.

#### Order and Time in Which the Twelve Minor Prophets Flourished

1. Jonah Prophesied between 823 b.c. and 783 b.c. in the reign of Jeroboam II., king of Israel. See 2Kgs 14:25.

2. Amos prophesied from about 823 b.c. to about 785 b.c. in the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in that of Jeroboam II., king of Israel. See Amo 1:1.
3. Hosea flourished from about 809 b.c. to about 698 b.c., in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in that of Jeroboam II., king of Israel. See Hos 1:1. [But see the observations in the preceding page].
4. Micah flourished between 757 b.c. and 698 b.c., in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. See Mic 1:1.
5. Nahum is supposed to have prophesied between 720 b.c. and 698 b.c., in the reign of Hezekiah.
6. Joel is supposed to have prophesied between 697 b.c. and 660 b.c., in the reign of Manasseh.
7. Zephaniah prophesied between 640 b.c. and 609 b.c., in the reign of Josiah. See Zep 1:1.
8. Habakkuk is thought to have prophesied between 606 b.c. and 598 b.c., in the reign of Jehoiakim.
9. Obadiah prophesied soon after 587 b.c., between the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the destruction of the Edomites by the same prince.
10. Haggai prophesied about 520 b.c. after the return from Babylon. See Hag 1:1.
11. Zechariah prophesied from 520 b.c. to about 518 b.c.; and was contemporary with Haggai. See Zac 1:1.
12. Malachi is generally believed to have prophesied about 436 b.c.

Under the figure of a wife proving false to her marriage vows, and bearing children that would follow her example, the prophet represents the shameful idolatry of the ten tribes, which provoked God to cast them off. The whole passage is information by action instead of words. The names of the children are all emblematical. The first is intended to put Israel in mind of their unrepented guilt, and the acts of cruelty committed in their palace of Jezreel, (1Kgs 21:1.) The second and third, signifying not finding mercy, and not my people, denote that, in consequence of their guilt, they were to be rejected of God, Hos 1:1-9. God promises, however, to repair the loss to his Church by calling in the Gentiles, Hos 1:10; and by uniting all the children of God under one head, the Messiah, in the latter days, Hos 1:11.

#### Verse 1

Hosea, the son of Beeri - See the preceding account of this prophet.

In the days of Uzziah, etc. - If we suppose, says Bp. Newcome, that Hosea prophesied during the course of sixty-six years, and place him from the year 790 before Christ to the year 724, he will have exercised his office eight years in the reign of Jeroboam the second, thirty-three years in the reign of Uzziah, the whole reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, and three years in the reign of Hezekiah; but will not have survived the taking of Samaria. But see the preceding account of this prophet.

I think the first verse to be a title to this book added by the compiler of his prophecies, and that it relates more to facts which took place in those reigns, and had been predicted by Hosea, who would only be said to have prophesied under an those kings. by his predictions, which were consecutively fulfilled under them. By those, though dead, he continued to speak. The prophet's work properly begins at Hos 1:2; hence called, "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea."

HOSEA 1: 2 When the LORD spoke at first by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and children of unfaithfulness; for the land commits great adultery, forsaking the LORD."

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#### Verse 2

A wife of whoredoms - That is, says Newcome, a wife from among the Israelites, who were remarkable for spiritual fornication, or idolatry. God calls himself the husband of Israel; and this chosen nation owed him the fidelity of a wife. See Exo 34:15; Deu 31:16; Jdg 2:17; Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14; Jer 31:32, Eze 16:17; Eze 23:5, Eze 23:27; Hosea 2, Hos 5:1-15; Rev 17:1, Rev 17:2. He therefore says, with indignation, Go join thyself in marriage to one of those who have committed fornication against me, and raise up children who, by the power of example, will themselves swerve to idolatry. See Hos 5:7. And thus show them that they are radically depraved.

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HOSEA 1: 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bore him a son.

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#### Verse 3

He went and took Gomer - All this appears to be a real transaction, though having a typical meaning. If he took an Israelite, he must necessarily have taken an idolatress, one who had worshipped the calves of Jeroboam at Dan or at Bethel.

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HOSEA 1: 4 The LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.

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#### Verse 4

Call his name Jezreel - יזרעאל that is, God will disperse. This seems to intimate that a dispersion or sowing of Israel shall take place; which happened under Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, 2Kgs 17:5, 2Kgs 17:6. But the word refers also to the name of a city, where Jehu slew Jezebel and all the children of Ahab. 2Kgs 9:10, 2Kgs 9:36; 2Kgs 10:6.

This was one of those prophetic names which we so often meet with in the Scriptures; e.g. Japheth Abraham, Israel, Judah, Joshua, Zerubbabel, Solomon, Sheer-jashub, etc.

The blood of Jezreel - Not Jehu's vengeance on Ahab's family, but his acts of cruelty while he resided at Jezreel, a city in the tribe of Issachar, Jos 19:18, where the kings of Israel had a palace, 1Kgs 21:1.

Will cause to cease the kingdom - Either relating to the cutting off of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, see 1Kgs 21:6, or to the ceasing of the kingdom of Israel from the house of Jehu, 2Kgs 10:30, and which was fulfilled, 2Kgs 15:10. - Newcome.

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HOSEA 1: 5 It will happen in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

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 Verse 5

In the valley of Jezreel - This also is supposed to relate either to some signal defeat of the Israelites by the Assyrians, which took place in the valley of Jezreel; or to the death of Zechariah, the fourth lineal descendant of Jehu, which may have happened here. See 2Kgs 15:10. - Newcome.

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HOSEA 1: 6 She conceived again, and bore a daughter. Then he said to him, "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah ; for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, that I should in any way pardon them.

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## Verse 6

Call her Lo-ruhamah - לא רהמה, "Not having obtained mercy." This also was a prophetic or typical name; and the reason of its imposition is immediately given:

For I will no more have mercy - לא אוסיף עיד ארחם - ki lo osiph od arachem, "For I will no more add to have mercy upon the house of Israel." This refers to the total destruction of that kingdom.

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HOSEA 1: 7 But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen."

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## Verse 7

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah - I will spare them as a kingdom after Israel has been carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.

And will save them by the Lord their God - Remarkably fulfilled in the supernatural defeat of the army of the Assyrians, see 2Kgs 19:35; and so they were saved not by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen. The former expression may mean, not in war by horses, i.e., yoked to war chariots, nor by horsemen - nor by cavalry, however efficient such troops might have then been deemed.

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HOSEA 1: 8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived, and bore a son.

HOSEA 1: 9 He said, "Call his name Lo-Ammi ; for you are not my people, and I will not be yours.

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## Verse 9

Call his name Lo-ammi - לא עמי Lo-ammi, "Not my people;" for which the reason is immediately given:

Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God - The word God is not added here by any of the ancient versions or MSS.; and yet the construction absolutely requires it, as Houbigant properly

observes, who thinks the present reading **לֹא אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם** lo eheyeh lachem, "I will not be to you," a corruption of the word **אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** eloheychem, "your God." It is strange that no various reading occurs on this verse in any MS. yet discovered. In two of the oldest of mine there is a blank of half a line left after the last word; and so it is in the Masoretic Bibles, though the sense is not complete; for it is evidently continued in the following verse. Probably God refers to the words, Exo 3:14 : **אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה** I am that I am. I am, **אֶהְיֶה** eheyeh, - I shall be, hath sent me unto you. I will not be your eheyeh, i.e., I will not be your God.

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HOSEA 1: 10 Yet the number of the children of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which can't be measured nor numbered; and it will come to pass that, in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'

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Verse 10

Yet the number of the children of Israel - God had promised that the children of Israel should be as the sand of the sea. See Gen 32:12; Rom 9:25, Rom 9:26. And though for their iniquities he had thinned and scattered them, yet the spirit and design of his promise and covenant shall be fulfilled. An Israel there shall be. In the place of the reprobated people, who were now no longer his people, there shall be found an Israel that shall be the children of the living God. See the above scriptures, and 1Pet 2:10. This must mean either the Israelites after their conversion to Christianity, or even the Gentiles themselves converted to God, and now become the true Israel.

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HOSEA 1: 11 The children of Judah and the children of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint themselves one head, and will go up from the land; for great will be the day of Jezreel.

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Verse 11

The children of Judah and the Children of Israel - After the return from Babylon, the distinction between Israel and Judah was entirely destroyed; and those of them that did return were all included under one denomination, Jews; and the one head may refer to Zerubbabel their leader, and afterwards under Ezra and Nehemiah. In the more extensive view of the prophet the one Head may mean Jesus Christ, under whom the true Israel, Jews and Gentiles, shall be finally gathered together; so that there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd over that flock.

They shall come up out of the land - Assyria and Chaldea in particular; but also from the various places of their dispersions in general.

Great shall be the day of Jezreel - He alludes to the meaning of the word, the seed of God. God who has dispersed - sown, them in different lands, shall gather them together; and that day of God's power shall be great and glorious. It was a wonderful seed time in the Divine justice; it shall then be a wonderful harvest in the Divine mercy. He sowed them among the nations in his wrath; he shall reap them and gather them in his bounty.