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HOSEA 5: 1 "Listen to this, you priests! Listen, house of Israel, and give ear, house of the king! For the judgement is against you; for you have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread on Tabor.

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This chapter begins with threatening the Israelites for ensnaring the people to idolatry by their sacrifices and other rites on Mizpah and Tabor, Hos 5:1-5. Their sacrifices, however costly, are declared to be unacceptable, Hos 5:6; and their substance is devoted to the locust, Hos 5:7. Nor is judgment to stop here. The cities of Judah are called upon, in a very animated manner, to prepare for the approach of enemies. Benjamin is to be pursued; Ephraim is to be desolate; and all this is intimated to Israel, that they may by repentance avert the judgment, Hos 5:8, Hos 5:9. The following verses contain farther denunciations, Hos 5:10-13, expressed in terms equally terrible and sublime, Hos 5:14. The Lord afflicts not willingly the children of men; he visits them with temporal calamities that he may heal their spiritual malady, Hos 5:15.

#### Verse 1

Hear ye this, O priests - A process is instituted against the priests, the Israelites, and the house of the king; and they are called on to appear and defend themselves. The accusation is, that they have ensnared the people, caused them to practice idolatry, both at Mizpah and Tabor. Mizpah was situated beyond Jordan; in the mountains of Gilead; see Jdg 11:29. And Tabor was a beautiful mountain in the tribe of Zebulum. Both these places are said to be eminent for hunting etc., and hence the natural occurrence of the words snare and net, in speaking of them.

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HOSEA 5: 2 The rebels are deep in slaughter; but I discipline all of them.

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#### Verse 2

The revolters are profound to make slaughter - Here may be a reference to the practice of hunters, making deep pits in the ground, and lightly covering them over, that the beasts, not discovering them, might fall in, and become a prey.

Though I have been a Rebuker - "I will bring chastisement on them all." As they have made victims of others to their idolatry, I will make victims of them to my justice. Some have thought that as many as wished to depart from the idolatrous worship set up by Jeroboam, were slaughtered; and thus Jeroboam the son of Nebat Made Israel to sin.

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HOSEA 5: 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me; for now, Ephraim, you have played the prostitute. Israel is defiled.

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#### Verse 3

I know Ephraim - I know the whole to be idolaters.

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HOSEA 5: 4 Their deeds won't allow them to turn to their God; for the spirit of prostitution is within them, and they don't know the LORD.

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Verse 4

They will not frame their doings - They never purpose to turn to God, they have fully imbibed the spirit of idolatry.

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HOSEA 5: 5 The pride of Israel testifies to his face. Therefore Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their iniquity. Judah also will stumble with them.

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Verse 5

The pride of Israel doth testify to his face - The effrontery with which they practise idolatry manifests, not only their insolence, but the deep depravity of their heart; but their pride and arrogance shall be humbled.

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HOSEA 5: 6 They will go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they won't find him. He has withdrawn himself from them.

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Verse 6

They shall go with their flocks - They shall offer many sacrifices, professing to seek and be reconciled to the Lord; but they shall not find him. As they still retain the spirit of their idolatry, he has withdrawn himself from them.

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HOSEA 5: 7 They are unfaithful to the LORD; for they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon will devour them with their fields.

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Verse 7

Now shall a month devour them - In a month's time the king of Assyria shall be upon them, and oblige them to purchase their lives and liberties by a grievous tax of fifty shekels per head. This Menahem, king of Israel, gave to Pul, king of Assyria, 2Kgs 15:16-20. Instead of month, some translate the original locust. "The locusts shall devour them."

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HOSEA 5: 8 "Blow the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah! Sound a battle cry at Beth Aven, behind you, Benjamin!

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Verse 8

Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah - Gibeah and Ramah were cities of Judah, in the tribe of Benjamin.

After thee, O Benjamin - An abrupt call of warning. "Benjamin, fly for thy life! The enemy is just behind thee!" This is a prediction of the invasion of the Assyrians, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

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HOSEA 5: 9 Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke. Among the tribes of Israel, I have made known that which will surely be.

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Verse 9

Among the tribes of Israel have I made known - They have got sufficient warning; it is their own fault that they have not taken it.

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HOSEA 5: 10 The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark. I will pour out my wrath on them like water.

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Verse 10

Like them that remove the bound - As execrable as they who remove the land-mark. They have leaped over law's enclosure, and scaled all the walls of right; they have despised and broken all laws, human and Divine.

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HOSEA 5: 11 Ephraim is oppressed, he is crushed in judgement; Because he is intent in his pursuit of idols.

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Verse 11

Walked after the commandment - Jeroboam's commandment to worship his calves at Dan and Beth-el. Many of them were not forced to do this, they did it willingly.

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HOSEA 5: 12 Therefore I am to Ephraim like a moth, and to the house of Judah like rottenness.

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Verse 12

Unto Ephraim as a moth - I will consume them by little and little, as a moth frets a garment.

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HOSEA 5: 13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, Then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you, neither will he cure you of your wound.

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Verse 13

When Ephraim saw his sickness - When both Israel and Judah felt their own weakness to resist their enemies, instead of calling upon and trusting in me, they sought sinful alliances, and trusted in their idols.

King Jareb - This name occurs nowhere in Scripture but here and in Hos 10:6. The Vulgate and Targum render ירב yareb, an avenger, a person whom they thought able to save them from their enemies. It is well known that Menahem, king of Israel, sought alliance with Pul and Tiglath-pileser, kings of Assyria, and Ahaz, king of Judah. These were the protectors that Ephraim sought after. See 2 Kings 15 and 16. But far from healing them by making them tributary, the Assyrians made their wound more dangerous.

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HOSEA 5: 14 For I will be to Ephraim like a lion, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I myself will tear in pieces and go away. I will carry off, and there will be no one to deliver.

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Verse 14

I will be - as a lion - כשחל cashshachel, as a panther or lioness.

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HOSEA 5: 15 I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me earnestly."

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Verse 15

I will go and return to my place - I will abandon them till they acknowledge their offenses. This had the wished-for effect, as we shall see in the following chapter; for they repented and turned to God, and he had mercy upon them. These two verses are considered as instances of the true sublime.