**Self-translations of the Minor Prophets**

Introduction

The following self-translations are being circulated with the following disclaimers/clarifications:

* Let me first of all admit that this is not literal word-for-word translation, what we call a “formal equivalent” translation. It is sometimes, but not all the time. This is not because I do not believe that a formal equivalent translation is best for serious study of Scripture. It is because there are many such translations available already and my goal was to help my students understand, as much as possible, the meaning of what they read.
* The result is a translation that includes some interpretation, naturally reflecting my understanding of the Hebrew text.
* My desire to produce something understandable but still similar to a formal equivalent translation led me to put added words in italics. Where there are more italics, one should rightly infer that the original text is a bit unclear and other interpretations are possible.
* Occasionally, I have felt further explanation would be helpful. I have added these in *italicized brackets.*
* The translation is my own work, but I admit to standing on the shoulders of English translators before me. On occasion, my translation may reflect other translations. Where I was substantially helped by a translation or a commentary, I have tried to admit such in the footnotes. When multiple current English translations have agreed on a certain translation for a word or phrase, I have often followed suit. I have not necessarily given credit to any one translation in that situation assuming that the mutual witness suggests that particular rendering is more public domain.
* If I have leaned on any one thing in the translation process, it would be the *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.* I have consistently consulted HALOT (as it is abbreviated) to help in fine-tuning the glosses of Hebrew vocabulary.
* I have included a number of footnotes to clarify the text, provide additional interpretation, give background information or, on occasion, make application.
* I have transliterated the “sacred name” of God—the “tetragrammaton”—as Yahweh. I have also opted to transliterate (instead of translate) the name of God *Adonai*.
* You will notice that there are no verse references in the actual text (although I have included verse references in the paragraph summaries of the text). My hope was that this would help you focus more on the flow of thought in a given book.

The work in hand is very much a work in process, and I would welcome feedback. A key goal of mine in this project is to make the Minor Prophets understandable to the next generation of believers, knowing that where there is no understanding there is no edification.

**The Book of Hosea**

**Introduction (1:1)**

*This is* the word of Yahweh which came[[1]](#footnote-1) to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam,[[2]](#footnote-2) the son of Joash, king of Israel.

**Hosea’s wife and children picture Israel’s apostasy (1:2-9)**

Yahweh began to speak through Hosea, and Yahweh said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife who will practice prostitution and *have* illegitimate children,[[3]](#footnote-3) for the land has committed blatant spiritual prostitution *and turned* away from following Yahweh.” And he went and he took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she became pregnant and she bore to him[[4]](#footnote-4) a son. And Yahweh said to him, “Call his name Jezreel, for just a little while and I shall punish the bloodshed *that took place at* Jezreel upon the house of Jehu[[5]](#footnote-5) and I shall bring to an end the kingdom of the house of Israel. And it shall be in that day that I shall break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.” And she became pregnant again and she gave birth to a daughter. And He said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I shall no longer show pity towards the house of Israel but I shall certainly carry themoff.[[6]](#footnote-6) But I will show mercy upon the house of Judah and I shall deliver them through Yahweh, their God, and I shall not save them with a bow or with a sword or via war, with horses and with charioteers.” And she weaned No Mercy and she became pregnant and she gave birth to a son. And He said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are no *longer* my people, and I am no *longer* your God.”

**Hosea’s children renamed to picture future divine mercy (1:10-2:1)**

However, the number of the children of Israel shall *someday* beas the sand of the sea which cannot be measured and cannot be counted. And it shall be at the place where it was said to them, you are not my people, *that* it shall be said to them, *you are* children of the living God.And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel shall assemble together, and they shall place over them one Head, and they shall go up from the land. For great shall be the day of Jezreel.Say to your brothers, “My People,” and to your sisters, “Mercy.”

**God’s lawsuit against His unfaithful people (2:2-13)**

Open a lawsuit against your mother, Open a lawsuit! For she is not my wife and I am not her husband. And let her put away her prostitution from her face and her adultery from between her breasts. Otherwise, I will strip off her clothes *until she is* naked and display her as the day she was born. And I shall make her as a wilderness and as a dried-up land, and I shall kill her with thirst. And I will have no mercy upon her children for they are children *born of* prostitution. For their mother has committed prostitution. She who has conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, “I will go after my lovers, the ones who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.” Therefore, behold, I shall bar your way with thorns, and I shall block her with a wall of stones so that she cannot find her *former* paths. And she shall chase her lovers but shall not catch them. And she shall seek them but not find *them.* Then she shall say, “I will go and return to my first husband for it was better to me then than it is now.” Because she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain and the new wine and the olive oil, and multiplied to her silver and gold *which* they used for Baal *worship.* Therefore, I will take back my grain at harvest time and my new wine during its season, and I will withdraw my wool and my linen *which I had provided* to cover her nakedness. And now, I will expose her nudity in the eyes of her lovers,[[7]](#footnote-7) and no one shall *be able to* deliver her from my hand. And I shall bring to an end all her joy-filled *celebrations*—her festivals, her new moon celebrations and her Sabbaths and all her appointed feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, of which she said they are my payment[[8]](#footnote-8) which my lovers have given to me. And I will turn them *[her vines and fig trees*] into an *overgrown* forest and the beasts of the field shall devour them. And I will deal with[[9]](#footnote-9) her *for her* Baal-*worship* days,[[10]](#footnote-10) when she made offerings to them and adorned herself with rings[[11]](#footnote-11) and jewelry and went after her lovers and forgot me. *This is* Yahweh’s decision!

**God woos unfaithful Israel back to Himself (2:14-23)**

Therefore, behold, I will woo her. And I shall bring her into the wilderness, and I shall talk to her tenderly. And there I shall restore *her* vineyards to her and *make* the Valley of Achor[[12]](#footnote-12) a Door of Hope. And she will respond *to me* there as during the days of her youth—even as the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.[[13]](#footnote-13) And it shall be in that day—*this is* Yahweh’s decision!—you shall refer to *me as*, “My Husband,” and you shall not again refer to me *as,* “My Master.”[[14]](#footnote-14) And I shall get rid of the names of the *various* Baals[[15]](#footnote-15) from her mouth, and they shall no longer be mentioned by their name. And in that day I shall make[[16]](#footnote-16) a covenant with them, with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of the air, and the creatures that crawl on the ground, and I shall remove bow and sword and war from the land and cause them to lie down safely. And I will betroth you to Myself forever. In fact, I will betroth you to Myself with righteousness and judgment, and with loyal kindness and mercy.[[17]](#footnote-17) And I will betroth you to Myself with faithfulness, with this result[[18]](#footnote-18): you shall come to know Yahweh. And it shall be in that day that I will *once again* respond—*this is* Yahweh’s decision—I will respond to the heavens, and they shall respond to the earth *by sending rain*. And the earth shall respond *by producing* grain and new wine and fresh olive-oil, and they shall respond by *bringing forth* God’s Planted One.[[19]](#footnote-19) That is, I shall plant *Israel* for myself in the land. And I shall have mercy on No Mercy. And I shall say to Not My People, “You are my People.” And he *in turn* will say, *“You are* My God.”

**Hosea’s remarriage to Gomer pictures Yahweh’s enduring love (3:1-5)**

Then Yahweh said to me, “Go again and love a woman loved by another and engaging in adultery, just as Yahweh has loved the children of Israel and they turn continually to other gods and love the raisin-cakes *associated with such idolatry.*”[[20]](#footnote-20) So I bought her for myself with fifteen silver *pieces*[[21]](#footnote-21) and a homer and a half of barley.[[22]](#footnote-22) And I said to her, “You shall remain with me many days. You shall not practice prostitution, nor shall you have relations with *another* man! And I also *shall do the same* to you.” For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pagan stone pillars,[[23]](#footnote-23) without ephod or idols.[[24]](#footnote-24) Afterwards, the children of Israel shall return and they shall seek Yahweh their God and David,[[25]](#footnote-25) their King; and they shall tremble *submissively* before Yahweh and His kindness in *those* latter days.

**God’s lawsuit against His people for abandoning Him (4:1-19)**

Hear the word of Yahweh, children of Israel, for Yahweh has opened a lawsuit against the inhabitants of the land; because there is no faithfulness, no loyal kindness, no *true* knowledge of God in the land. There is making of oaths and *then* denying them, and murdering, and stealing, and committing adultery. They break out *with excessive violence—*bloodshed follows bloodshed *one right after the other.* Therefore, the land shall dry up and every inhabitant in it shall dwindle away, including the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky; even the fish of the sea shall be taken away. Yet do not let anyone bring an accusation or anyone rebuke because your people are like those who contest the verdict of a priest.[[26]](#footnote-26) Therefore, you shall stumble by day, and *your* prophets shall also stumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed because *they* lack *any genuine* knowledge of me. Because you have rejected *such* knowledge,[[27]](#footnote-27) I will also reject you from being my priest.[[28]](#footnote-28) Because you forgot the law of your God, I—even I—will forget your children.

According to their abundance, so they sinned against me. I shall change their glory into shame. They feed on the sins of my people, they desire their iniquity. And it shall be like people, like priest[[29]](#footnote-29): I will deal with him for his ways, and I will recompense him for his actions.[[30]](#footnote-30) And they shall eat and not be satisfied. They shall practice prostitution but they shall not increase in population, for they have stopped obeying Yahweh. Prostitution, wine, and new wine have seized the heart. My people inquire[[31]](#footnote-31) of their wooden *idols,* and their stick[[32]](#footnote-32) communicates *direction* to them; for a spirit of prostitution has led them astray, and they have prostituted *themselves* away from their God. They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains, and they send up offerings under oak and poplar and terebinth trees *merely* because they *provide* good shade, with the result that your daughters practice prostitution, and your daughters-in-law[[33]](#footnote-33) commit adultery. Am I not *forced* to punish your daughters because they have practiced prostitution and your daughters-in-law because they have committed adultery? Indeed, the *men* have gone off with prostitutes and they have sacrificed with religious prostitutes.[[34]](#footnote-34) A people who thus *refuse to* distinguish *right from wrong* shall come to ruin. Though you practice prostitution, O Israel, keep Judah from becoming *similarly* guilty. Also, do not enter Gilgal;[[35]](#footnote-35) neither go up to Beth-Aven[[36]](#footnote-36) nor swear, *as* Yahweh lives.[[37]](#footnote-37) For like a stubborn cow, Israel is stubborn. Now Yahweh will pasture them as a young ram in an open *field*.[[38]](#footnote-38) Ephraim is *inexorably* bound to *his* false images. Leave him alone. Their strong drink drained, they *then* turn unfailingly to prostitution; their rulers wholeheartedly love shame.[[39]](#footnote-39) A spirit[[40]](#footnote-40) *of harlotry* has bound her in its wings, and they shall be ashamed of their *idolatrous* sacrifices.

**God tears in hope that His people will turn (5:1-6:3)**

Hear this, O priests, and listen attentively, O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king, for the judgment involves you. For you have been a snare for Mizpah and a trapping net spread out over Tabor.[[41]](#footnote-41) Yes, the transgressors have engaged in intense slaughter,[[42]](#footnote-42) and I *will render* discipline to all of them. I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me; for now you have committed prostitution, O Ephraim, and Israel has defiled itself. Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God for a spirit of prostitution is in their midst and they have not known Yahweh.[[43]](#footnote-43) Israel’s arrogance[[44]](#footnote-44) will testify against him[[45]](#footnote-45); therefore, Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their guilt. Judah also shall stumble with them. They shall come to seek Yahweh with their flocks and their herds, but they shall not find *Him.* He has withdrawn from them. They have been unfaithful to Yahweh for they have given birth to illegitimate children; now *their* new moon ritual shall lead to their demise[[46]](#footnote-46) *and the loss of* their plots of land.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Blow the ram’s horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah! Raise the war cry in Beth-aven! *Watch out* behind you, Benjamin! Ephraim shall become a horrible desolation in the day of punishment. What I am announcing to the tribes of Israel is certain! *Even* the princes of Judah have become like ones who move a boundary marker; *therefore,* I will pour out my anger upon them like *a torrent of* water. Ephraim is broken, crushed *by* judgment, because he was intent to go after that which is empty.[[48]](#footnote-48) I *have become* as pus to Ephraim and as rot[[49]](#footnote-49) to the house of Judah.

When Ephraim saw his “sickness”[[50]](#footnote-50) and Judah his sore, then Ephraim went to Assyria and sent to the great king;[[51]](#footnote-51) but he was not able to heal you or remove from you *your* sore. For I am like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah; I, *even* I myself, will tear *them* in pieces, and I will carry *them* off. And none shall deliver *them*. I shall *then* leave *and* return to my place until they admit their guilt and seek My face. In their distress, they will go on a search for Me.

Come, and let us return to Yahweh—since He was the one who tore *us* in pieces, He will also heal us. He struck *us*; He will therefore bind up *our wounds*.He will restore us after two days; on the third day, He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight.[[52]](#footnote-52)So let’s acknowledge *Him;* let’s make it our aim to know[[53]](#footnote-53) Him *personally*. As sure *as* the first hint of dawn[[54]](#footnote-54) is His rising *to help us.* Yes, He will come to us like rain, as the late rains[[55]](#footnote-55) that water the earth.

**Fickle and murderous, chastisement awaits (6:4-7:7)**

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Because your loyal kindness is like a morning cloud and as the dew that dissipates early. For this reason, I have axed *them* down with *My* prophets, and I have slain them with the words of My mouth. And *My* judgments[[56]](#footnote-56) against you have gone forth like light.[[57]](#footnote-57) For I take pleasure in loyal kindness and not sacrifice, and a *genuine* knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they, like Adam, have broken *their* covenant *with me*; there[[58]](#footnote-58) they dealt treacherously toward me.

Gilead is a town of iniquity-workers, *its terrain* marred[[59]](#footnote-59) with *their* bloody *footprints.* And like a band of robbers lying in wait for *their* victim[[60]](#footnote-60) is the company of priests *who* murder on the way to Shechem[[61]](#footnote-61); indeed, they have behaved shamefully.I have seen something horrible in the house of Israel: Ephraim’s prostitution is there; Israel has been defiled.[[62]](#footnote-62)A harvest *of chastisement* is also appointed for you, O Judah.

Just when I would restore the fortunes of My people, just when I would bring healing to Israel, then Ephraim’s iniquity and the evil actions of Samaria manifest themselves *afresh*, for they deal falsely *with each other*—thieves break in; outside, bandits attack.And they do not consider in their hearts that I take note of[[63]](#footnote-63) all their evil deeds. Their works surround them; they are *all* before My face.

By their evil deeds, they cause *their* king to rejoice; princes, by their lies. *However,* they are all enflamed with adultery,[[64]](#footnote-64) like an oven so heated by a baker *that* he can stop stirring *the fire from the time* he kneads the dough until *the time he is finished and the dough* is leavened.[[65]](#footnote-65) On the *festive* day[[66]](#footnote-66) of our king, *our* princes make *him* sick with the heat of wine; he *unknowingly* stretches out his hand *to carouse* with men who are *actually* mocking him. For they draw near *to him* with hearts that are like an oven in their intrigue. All night their angry *design against their ruler* smolders *and* in the morning it blazes up like a flame of fire. All of them are enflamed[[67]](#footnote-67) like an oven, and they consume their rulers. All their kings have fallen—none of them calls upon Me!

**Turning every way but Godward for help (7:8-16)**

Ephraim mingles himself with the nations[[68]](#footnote-68); Ephraim is a bread-cake[[69]](#footnote-69) that has not been turned.[[70]](#footnote-70) Foreigners have consumed his strength,[[71]](#footnote-71) but he does not know it. Also gray hair has snuck in upon him,[[72]](#footnote-72) but *again* he does not know it. Israel’s arrogance testifies against him. Nevertheless, they do not return to Yahweh, their God, and they do not seek Him in *spite of* all this.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Ephraim is like an easily-duped, senseless dove: they call to Egypt; they go to Assyria. As they go *to seek the help of these foreign nations*, I will entrap them with my bird-net; I will bring them down as a bird of the heavens. I will discipline them in accordance with the report of their assembly.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Woe is upon them! For they have run away from Me. Devastation *has come* to them because they have revolted against Me. I myself would deliver them, but they have spoken lies against Me. In fact, their cry to Me when they wail upon their beds is not from their heart.[[75]](#footnote-75) They assemble themselves for grain and wine *but* turn aside from Me.[[76]](#footnote-76) Even though I *was the One* who trained *and* strengthened their arms, they still devise evil against Me. They return but not to the Most High; they are like a limp bow. Their princes will fall by the sword because of their accursed tongue. This will be their derision in the land of Egypt.

**Soon to be discarded—a metaphorical return to Egypt (8:1-14)**

*Place* the trumpet to your mouth. Like an eagle *the attacker descends* upon the house of Yahweh because they have transgressed my covenant and they have rebelled against my law. They will cry out to me: “O God, we—Israel—know you.” *But* Israel has rejected that which is good; the enemy will pursue him. They set up kings but not by Me. They install leaders but I have not been consulted*.*[[77]](#footnote-77) With their silver and their gold they have made for themselves false gods with the result that they *[Israel]* will be exterminated.[[78]](#footnote-78)

He *[Yahweh]* has rejected your calf *idol,* O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of *worshipping me in* purity? For *this calf has* originated with Israel *[not Me].* In fact, a craftsman has made it and, therefore, it is not God. To the contrary, the calf of Samaria will be *reduced to* splinters.

Because they sow the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no bud. It shall produce no flour. If perchance it does produce, foreigners will swallow it up. Israel *itself* is swallowed up. Now they shall be among the nations like a discarded vessel.[[79]](#footnote-79) For they go up to Assyria *like* a wild donkey who *wanders off* alone. Ephraim has sold herself to *her* lovers.[[80]](#footnote-80) Even if they should buy *allies* *from* among the nations, I will assuredly[[81]](#footnote-81) muster them *for judgment[[82]](#footnote-82)* and *their* princes shall soon begin *to suffer* because of the burden *of tribute laid upon them* by the king.[[83]](#footnote-83)

Because Ephraim multiplied altars for sinning, [[84]](#footnote-84) they became to him altars for sinning. *If* I should write down for him an immense list of *what* my law *requires,* yet they would count *them* as something unrelated *to them*. *As for* My sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice the meat and they eat *it, but* Yahweh does not take pleasure in them. He will shortly think upon their iniquity and call them to account for their sins—they shall return to Egypt. For Israel has forgotten its Maker and built palaces. Even Judah multiplied fortified cities. Therefore, I will send fire on their cities and it shall consume their fortresses.

**Rejecting God, they are now rejected of Him (9:1-17)**

Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like *other* nations *do,* for you have practiced prostitution away from your God. You have loved a prostitute’s pay on every grain threshing-floor.[[85]](#footnote-85) Threshing floor and winepress shall not feed them, and new wine shall fail them. They shall not remain in the land of Yahweh; Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and in Assyria they shall eat that which is unclean. They shall not pour out wine *offerings* to Yahweh, and their sacrifices shall not be pleasing to Him. Their *sacrificial portions* *will be* like bread eaten by mourners: all the ones eatingshall be defiled. For their bread *shall be* for themselves *only (for satisfying hunger)*; it shall not enter the house of Yahweh.[[86]](#footnote-86) What shall they do on appointed *celebration* days? And on the feast-days of Yahweh? Even if they walk away from destruction,[[87]](#footnote-87) Egypt will gather them up *and* Memphis shall bury them. Weeds shall possess their silver valuables; thorns *shall be* in their tents.

Days of punishment have come. Days of retribution have come—let Israel take note! The prophet is *treated as* a fool; a man with the Spirit is *considered* mad because of the multitude of your iniquity and *because your* hostility *toward God and His messengers* is great. A prophet keeps watch—in concert with my God—over Ephraim. *However*, the trapping net of a fowler is upon all *the prophet’s* ways, *even* hostility in the house of his God.[[88]](#footnote-88) They have corrupted themselves terribly as in the days of Gibeah. He shall think upon their iniquity; He shall call their sins to account.

I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness. As the first-ripe fruit on a fig tree at its first *harvest* I saw your fathers.[[89]](#footnote-89) *Then* they went to Baal-peor, and they consecrated themselves to shame. And they became abominations just like that which they loved. *As for* Ephraim, their greatness will fly away like a bird—*there shall be* no *more* birth, no *more* pregnancy, and no *more* conception. Even if they should have children to rear, I will bereave them down to *the last* person. Truly, indeed, woe *be* upon them when I depart from them! Ephraim—in a way similar to how I provided for Tyre—[[90]](#footnote-90)has been planted in a *pleasant* grazing place; but Ephraim *will now* lead out his children to the one slaying them.

Give to them, O Yahweh, what shall you give them? Give them a womb that miscarries and dry breasts.[[91]](#footnote-91) All their evil *practices are* *found* at Gilgal[[92]](#footnote-92); that is why I have come to hate them there. Because of the evil of their deeds, I will expel them from My house; I will not again love[[93]](#footnote-93) them—all their princes are rebels. Ephraim has been struck. Their roots have dried up. They shall not *again* produce fruit. Even if they should give birth, I will kill the precious *babies* in their womb. My God will reject them because they did not listen to Him. Therefore, they shall be wanderers among the nations.

**Bethel’s calf cannot save them from Yahweh’s wrath (10:1-15)**

Israel is a flourishing vine *who* bears fruit for himself. *However,* according to the multitude of his fruit he has multiplied altars *and* according to the productivity of his land he has been productive at *erecting* stone pillars. Their heart is deceived; now they shall suffer for their guilt. He shall break down their altars; He shall ravage their stone pillars. For they will soon say, we *now* have no king because we did not fear Yahweh; but *if we had a* king—what could he do for us? They have spoken *empty* words, uttered a meaningless curse, and made an *insincere* covenant—*as evidenced by* the “justice” *that* has sprouted up like poison in the furrows of the field.

The inhabitants[[94]](#footnote-94) of Samaria worry over the calf *idol* of Beth-aven. Truth be told, its devotees[[95]](#footnote-95) and its idolatrous priests will mourn for it—those who used torejoice[[96]](#footnote-96) over it and over its glory—when it departs from them *into exile*. Indeed, it will be brought to Assyria as a gift to the great king. Ephraim will obtain shame and Israel will be ashamed of its wooden *idol*.[[97]](#footnote-97) Samaria *and* her king will be destroyed, *whisked away* like a twig upon the surface of water. And the high places of Aven,[[98]](#footnote-98) the sin of Israel, shall be made unusable; thorns and thistles will grow up over their altars. Then they shall say to the mountains, “Cover us!” and to the hills, “Fall upon us!”

From the days of Gibeah is the sin of Israel, *and* they have persevered *in the same sinful ways*. Will not war against evildoers overtake them in Gibeah?[[99]](#footnote-99) When I am ready,[[100]](#footnote-100) I shall discipline them, and I shall gather peoples against them when *the time comes* to bind them for their two sins.[[101]](#footnote-101) At the present time, Ephraim is a heifer who is enjoying the *[comparatively light]* work of threshing, but I will *now* take charge of[[102]](#footnote-102) her fair neck: I will put Ephraim to the yoke. Let Judah plow! Let Jacob harrow for himself!

Sow for yourselves in accordance with righteousness! Reap in accordance with loyal kindness! Break up for yourselves land that has been cleared and readied! Now *is the time* to seek Yahweh until He should come and rain righteousness upon you. You have plowed wickedness. You have reaped injustice. You have eaten the fruit of lies, for you have trusted in your way, in the great multitude of your warriors. Therefore, a tumult of war shall rise up against your people, and all your fortifications shall be ruined just as Shalman devastated Beth-Arbel in the day of battle—where mothers along with *their* children were dashed to pieces. Thus, he shall do to you, O Bethel, because of your great wickedness; at dawn,[[103]](#footnote-103) the king of Israel shall certainly be destroyed.

**Spurned love rages, then pities and woos (11:1-11)**

When Israel was a boy, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. *To the extent to which* the *prophets[[104]](#footnote-104)* called to them, so they went away from them. They sacrificed to Baals, and they offered incense to idols. But I was the one who taught Ephraim to walk, holding them by their arms, yet they did not know that I healed them. I led them humanely,[[105]](#footnote-105) with cords of love. I also became for them like those who take the yoke off of the jaws; I reached out to them *and* I fed *them.*

He shall not return to the land of Egypt but, because he has refused to return *to Me,* Assyria shall be his king. Indeed, the sword shall rage against his cities, destroy his diviners, and devour *them* because of their counsels.[[106]](#footnote-106) Yet my people are hung up on being unfaithful to Me; thoughthey call out to the Most High, He shall not raise *them* up at all.

How shall I give you up, O Ephraim? Shall I hand you over, O Israel? How shall I give you up as Admah? Shall I make you like Zeboim?[[107]](#footnote-107) My heart within Me has changed. My compassions are altogether aroused. I shall not unleash my full anger. I shall not again destroy Ephraim.[[108]](#footnote-108) For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst. Therefore, I shall not come *and* *fully vent against them* my exasperation. They shall follow after Yahweh. He shall roar like a lion. When He shall roar, then *His* children shall come with trembling from the *Mediterranean* Sea. They shall come with trembling like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I shall cause them to dwell in their houses. *This is* Yahweh’s decision!

**Angering the God of their history (11:12-12:14)**

Ephraim has encompassed me with lies and the house of Israel with deceit. Even Judah is constantly restless[[109]](#footnote-109) in her relationship with God and with the Holy One who is faithful. Ephraim feeds on wind and pursues the east wind[[110]](#footnote-110) all day long, and multiples deception and violence. They make a covenant with Assyria, and they bring oil to Egypt. Now Yahweh has a court case against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways; he will recompense him according to his deeds. While in the womb he grasped his brother by the heel, and in his manhood[[111]](#footnote-111) he strove with God. Yes, he strove against the angel, and he prevailed. He wept and he sought His favor. At Bethel he found Him, and there He spoke with us. Indeed, Yahweh, the God of hosts, Yahweh *is* His to-be-remembered name.

You, therefore, should return to your God, keep loyal kindness and justice, and wait continually upon your God. *Instead, Ephraim[[112]](#footnote-112) is like a* merchant with deceitful scales in his hand who loves to cheat *others*. Ephraim asserts, “Surely I have become rich. I have gained wealth for myself. In all my acquiring *wealth*, they will not find in me iniquity *or* that which is sin.” But ever since the land of Egypt, I *have been* Yahweh your God. I shall cause you to live in tents once again as in appointed *feast*-days.[[113]](#footnote-113) I also spoke by the prophets, I was the one who multiplied *their* visions, and I spoke *to you* in parables by the hand of the prophets. Does Gilead *have* sin? Surely its *inhabitants* shall come to nothing. In Gilgal, they have sacrificed bulls—their altars shall surely become as *stone-*heaps in the furrows of the field.

Now Jacob fled to the field of Aram, and Israel served for a wife; for a wife, he guarded *sheep.* And by a prophet Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt and by a prophet we were guarded.[[114]](#footnote-114) Ephraim bitterly provoked Him to anger; therefore, his Lord shall abandon him to his blood guiltiness and will bring back upon him his disgrace.

**Consequences of forgetting their true Help (13:1-16)**

*In the past* when Ephraim spoke, *people* trembled *at his words;* he was exalted in Israel. But because of *his* Baal *worship,* he has become guilty, and he died. And now, they sin more and more. They have *used* their silver to make for themselves molten images, idols *fashioned* with all their skill—entirely the work of craftsmen. They say to them—the people who come to sacrifice[[115]](#footnote-115)—“Let them kiss the calves *we have made.”* Therefore, they shall be as a morning cloud and as an early dew *that* dissipates, as chaff that swirls from the threshing floor, and as smoke *that escapes* through a window.

But I, Yahweh, *have been* your God since the land of Egypt—surely you will acknowledge that there is no God besides Me and no one who delivers *you* besides Me. *In fact,* I was the one who cared for you in the wilderness, in a land of drought. As *for* their pasture,[[116]](#footnote-116) they ate their full. They ate their full but their heart was lifted up; therefore, they have forgotten me. For this reason I shall be to them like a lion; I shall lie in wait *for them* along the way like a leopard. I shall meet up with them like a bear robbed of her cubs, rip open their chest, and devour them there like a lioness, *just as if* a wild beast of the field were to pull them to pieces.

He[[117]](#footnote-117) has destroyed you, O Israel, because *you are* against Me—against the *only One who can* help you. Where then is your king who will provide deliverance throughout your cities? And *where are* your rulers, *the ones you received* when you petitioned[[118]](#footnote-118) *Me*, “Give me a king and princes?” I gave you a king in my anger, and I took him away in my rage.

The iniquity of Ephraim has been securely recorded[[119]](#footnote-119); his sin is stored up *to be used as evidence against him*.[[120]](#footnote-120) Childbirth pains shall come upon him. *However,* he will be *like* an unwise son because he will not present himself at the opening of the womb *at the proper* time.[[121]](#footnote-121) Shall I ransom them from the hand of Sheol?[[122]](#footnote-122) Shall I redeem them from death? Where[[123]](#footnote-123) are your plagues, O death? Where is your sting, O Sheol? Compassion[[124]](#footnote-124) shall be hidden from my eyes. Though he flourish among his brethren, an east wind—the wind of Yahweh[[125]](#footnote-125)—shall come up out of the wilderness. His fountain shall dry up, and his spring shall become dry. It shall plunder *his* treasury of every valuable object. Samaria shall suffer for her guilt for she has rebelled against her God. They will fall by the sword, their children shall be dashed to pieces, and their expecting mothers shall be ripped open.

**God’s arms still open wide (14:1-8)**

Return, O Israel, unto Yahweh your God for you have stumbled in your iniquity. Take with you words and return to Yahweh. Say to Him, “*Please* take away[[126]](#footnote-126) all *our* iniquity. Accept *our* genuine *confession* that we may offer as recompense bulls, *that is,* our lips. Assyria will not deliver us. We will not ride upon horses, and we will not again say, ‘*This is* our God,’ to the work of our hands, when *it is* in You *that* fatherless *Israel* will find mercy.”

I shall heal their faithlessness *to Me*. I shall love them of My own accord for My anger has turned back away from him. I shall be as the dew to Israel. He shall blossom like the lily plant and sink his roots like the Lebanon *cedar tree*. His shoots shall spring forth; his glory shall be like *that of* an olive tree, and his fragrance like *that of* a Lebanon cedar tree. Those who dwell in his shade will once again revive the *production of* grain. They shall blossom like the vine; his *name* *shall be* famous like the wine of Lebanon.

O Ephraim, What have I ever had to do with idols?[[127]](#footnote-127) I am the One who responded to and cared for him. I am like a green cypress tree. From Me is your fruit to be found!

**Conclusion (14:9)**

Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Discerning? Let him acknowledge that the ways of Yahweh are right. The righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble over them.

**The Book of Joel**

**Introduction: An unparalleled locust plague (1:1-4)**

*This is* the word of Yahweh that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:

Hear this, O elders,
and give ear, all inhabitants of the land.
Has anything like this happened in your days
or even in the days of your fathers?
Recount this to your children
and your children to their children
and their children to the next generation.
That which was left behind by the *gazam-*locust the ’*arbeh-*locusthas eaten.
That which was left behind by the ’*arbeh-*locustthe *yeleq-*locusthas eaten.
And that which the *yeleq-*locustleft behind the *hasil-*locust has eaten.[[128]](#footnote-128)

**The locust plague as a wake-up call to the nation (1:5-14)**

Wake up, O drunkards, and weep.
Wail, all you drinkers of wine
over your fresh grape extract,[[129]](#footnote-129)
for it is cut off from your mouth.
For a nation has ascended against My land,
mighty and innumerable.
Its teeth are the teeth of a lion,
and it has the fangs of a lioness.
It has made My grape vine a devastation
and My fig tree a stump.
It has completely stripped and knocked *it* down;[[130]](#footnote-130)
it has made bare[[131]](#footnote-131) its branches.
Lament like a virgin clothed in sackcloth
*mourns* for her husband-to-be.[[132]](#footnote-132)
The grain offering and the drink offering have been cut off
from the house of Yahweh. The priests mourn,
the ministers of Yahweh.
The field has been devastated;
the ground has withered.
For the grain has been destroyed,
the new wine has ceased,
*and* the fresh olive oil has dried up.
Be ashamed, O tenant-farmers.[[133]](#footnote-133)
Wail, O vinedressers,
for the wheat and for the barley
because the harvest of the field is lost.
The vine has dried up,
and the fig tree has wasted away.
The pomegranate tree as well as the date palm and apple tree—
all the trees of the field, *in fact—*have withered.
Indeed, joy has disappeared
from the human race.
Clothe yourselves *with sackcloth* and mourn, O priests.
Wail, O servants of the altar.
Come, spend the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God,
for the grain offering and the drink offering
have been withheld from the house of your God.
Set aside a fast-*day.*
Call an assembly.
Gather the elders
*and* all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of Yahweh, your God,
and call out to Yahweh for help.

**The locust plague as a harbinger of the Day of the Lord (1:15-2:11)**[[134]](#footnote-134)

Alas for the day!
For the Day of Yahweh is near
and it shall come like the destruction of the Almighty.
Has not food been cut off
from before our eyes,
joy and rejoicing
from the house of our God?[[135]](#footnote-135)
*The seed* kept aside *for planting* withers
under their shovels,
the storehouses lie desolate,
the grain pits are ruined—
*all* because the grain has dried up.[[136]](#footnote-136)
How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle wander around in confusion
for they have no pasture.
The flocks of sheep also feel punished.[[137]](#footnote-137)
To you, O Yahweh, I will call.
For a fire has consumed
the grazing places of the wilderness,
and a flame has devoured
all the trees of the field.
Even the beasts of the field
pant for You
because the streams of water
have dried up
and a fire has consumed
the pastures of the wilderness.

Blow the trumpet in Zion
and sound an alarm on My holy mountain.
All the inhabitants of earth shall tremble with fear
for the Day of Yahweh is come, for it is near.
A day of darkness and *more* darkness.
A day of clouds and gloominess.
As the first light of dawn[[138]](#footnote-138) spread over the mountains,
a vast and mighty people *have come*,
the like of which has never been
since the world *began*
and after which shall not happen again
unto the years of many generations.
Before it *[the aforementioned vast and mighty people]* a fire devours;
after it, a flame scorches.
Before it, the land is like the Garden of Eden*;*
after it*, like a* desolate wasteland.
Furthermore, there is no escape from it.
Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
and as chariot-horses *run*, so they run.
As with the sound of chariots,
they leap over the tops of the mountains,
like the sound of a flame of fire
devouring straw,
like a mighty people
set in order for battle.
Before them, peoples writhe in pain.
All faces grow pale*.*[[139]](#footnote-139)
They run like mighty men.
They ascend a wall
like men of war.
And each rushes *straight ahead* in his rank;
they do not abandon their course.
Each does not jostle his comrade.
A man moves forward in his *assigned* column.
*Even* when they fall amidst weapons,
they shall not break away *from their track.*
They rush forth against the city.
They run along the wall.
They climb up on the houses.
They enter through the windows like a thief.
The earth quakes before them.
The heavens shake.
The sun and the moon grow dark.
And the stars withdraw their shining.
Yahweh raises His voice
before His army.
Indeed, His camp is very vast,
for mighty is He who keeps His word.
Indeed, great is the Day of Yahweh
and very fearful. Who can endure it?

**Heightened call to repentance (2:12-17)**

And yet even now—
*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—
return to Me with all your heart
even with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.
And rend your hearts
and not your garments.
And return to Yahweh your God,
for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and great in loyal kindness.
He even relents from *sending* punishment.
Who knows *whether* He will return and relent
and leave a blessing in His wake,[[140]](#footnote-140)
*such as a* grain offering and a drink offering
to Yahweh, your God.

Blow a trumpet in Zion!
Set aside a fast-*day*!
Call an assembly!
Gather the people,
sanctify the congregation,
assemble the elders,
gather the children
and nursing infants!
Let the new groom exit his bedroom
and the new bride her chamber.[[141]](#footnote-141)
Between the porch and the altar,
let the priests weep
(the ministers of Yahweh), and let them say,
“Look compassionately, O Yahweh, upon Your people
and do not make Your inheritancea disgrace,
a derision among the heathen.
Why should they say among the nations,
‘Where is their God?’”

**Yahweh promises His repentant people recovery from the locust plague (2:18-27)**

Then Yahweh became jealous for His land,
and He had compassion upon His people.
And Yahweh answered and said to His people,
“Behold, I am sending to you
grain and new wine and fresh olive oil
and you shall be satisfied with it.
And I will not again make you
a disgrace among the heathen.
I shall remove from you
the northerner
and drive him away to a land
dry and desolate—
his vanguard into the eastern sea *[Dead Sea]*
and his rearguard into the western sea *[Mediterranean Sea]*.[[142]](#footnote-142)
Both his stench shall go up
and his putrefying smell
for he has committed great *wrongs*.”

Do not fear, O land;
*rather,* shout with joy and rejoice,
for Yahweh will do great *good*.
Do not fear, O beasts of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness shall sprout green.
Indeed, the trees shall bear their fruit;
the fig tree and grape-vine shall yield their abundance.

Shout with joy and rejoice,
O sons of Zion,
before Yahweh, your God,
for He has restored to you
the early rain according to what is normal.[[143]](#footnote-143)
Yes, He has *as good as* poured out for you already showers of rain,
both the early rain *[in October-December]* and the late rain *[in March-April]* *as* in former *times*.
And the threshing floors shall be full of threshed grain.
And the vats[[144]](#footnote-144) shall overflow with fresh wine and fresh oil.
And I will recompense you *for* the years
that the *arbeh-*locust has eaten,
*also that which* the *yeleq-*locust, the *hasil*-locust, and the *gazam-*locust *has eaten*—
My great army
which I sent against you.
And you will eat and eat and be satisfied.
You shall praise the name of Yahweh, your God,
who has dealt with you wondrously.
My people shall never ever be put to shame.
Then you will know that I am in the midst of Israel
and *that* I am Yahweh, your God, and *there is* none other.
My people shall never ever be put to shame.

**Future Spirit outpouring (2:28-32)**

And it shall be after this
*that* I shall pour out My Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.
Your old men shall dream dreams.
Your young men shall see visions.
Furthermore, even upon male servants and upon female servants
I shall pour out My Spirit in those days,
and I shall give signs in the heavens and on earth:
blood and fire and columns of smoke.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the day of Yahweh comes—
*that* great and fearful *day*.
And it shall be *that* all who call on the name of Yahweh shall be saved,
for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance
(according as Yahweh has said)
and among the survivors
whom Yahweh is calling.

**Future punishment of the nations that troubled Israel (3:1-15)**

For behold in those days and at that time (when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem), I shall also gather together all the heathen and I shall bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

And I shall enter into judgment with them there
on behalf of my people, even mine inheritance, Israel,
whom they have scattered among the heathen.
They have also apportioned up My land.
They cast lots for My people,
gave a boy as the price for a prostitute,
and sold a girl as the price for wine and *then* drank it.

Furthermore, what are you *attempting to accomplish* against Me, Tyre and Sidon,
and all the districts of the Philistines?
Are you *attempting* revenge against Me?[[145]](#footnote-145)
If you are *attempting* revenge against Me,
*with* extreme quickness
I will return your retaliation on your own head.
Because *it was* My silver and My gold that you took,
and *it was* My valued treasures that you carted off to your temples.
Both the inhabitants of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem
you sold to the Greeks
in order to remove them far away
from their own country.
Behold, I will summon them from the place
where you have sold them,
and I shall return your doings upon your own head.
And I will sell your sons and your daughters
into the hand of the inhabitants of Judah
and they shall sell them to the Sabaeans,
to a faraway nation.
For Yahweh has spoken.

Declare this among the heathen:
Prepare for war!
Awaken the mighty men!
Let all the men of war
advance and ascend!
Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruning hooks[[146]](#footnote-146) into spears!
Let the weakling say,
“I am mighty.”
Hurry and come,
all you surrounding nations,
and gather yourselves there!
March down there *to them*, O Yahweh, Your warriors.
Let the heathen rouse themselves and come up
to the Valley of Jehoshaphat
for there I shall sit to judge
all the surrounding nations.
Plunge in the sickle
for the harvest has grown ripe.
Come! Go down *into the winepress!*
Indeed, the winepress is full,
the vats are overflowing—
for their evil is great.
Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision—
for the Day of Yahweh is near
in the valley of decision.
The sun and moon have grown dark,
and the stars have retracted their shining.

**Yahweh and Jerusalem’s future (3:16-21)**

Yahweh will roar from Zion
and will lift up His voice from Jerusalem;
the heavens and the earth shall shake.
But Yahweh shall be a refuge for His people
and a stronghold for the children of Israel.
And you shall know that I, Yahweh, your God,
dwell in Zion, My holy mountain.
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
and no foreigners[[147]](#footnote-147) shall pass through it again.And it shall be, in that day,
*that* the mountains shall drip fresh grape extract,
the hills shall flow with milk,
and all the streams of Judah
shall flow with water.
And a spring shall go out from the house of Yahweh
and irrigate the Valley[[148]](#footnote-148) of Shittim.

Egypt shall become a desolation,
and Edom a deserted wasteland
because of *their* violence against the inhabitants of Judah
whose innocent blood they spilled in their land.

But Judah shall dwell forever,
and Jerusalem from generation to generation.
And I will avenge their blood *that* I have not avenged,
and Yahweh shall reside[[149]](#footnote-149) in Zion.

**The Book of Amos**

**Introduction: Yahweh has roared His displeasure (1:1-2)**

*These are* the words of Amos, who was one of the sheep-breeders[[150]](#footnote-150) from Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. *Amos* said: “Yahweh roars from Zion, and from Jerusalem He lifts up His voice. As a result,[[151]](#footnote-151) the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel[[152]](#footnote-152) withers.”

**Against Damascus (1:3-5)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Damascus’ three offences, even on account of *its* four, I will not revoke its *sentence*[[153]](#footnote-153) because they trampled Gilead with threshing sledges *imbedded with* iron.[[154]](#footnote-154) Therefore, I shall send fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall consume the citadels of Ben-Hadad.[[155]](#footnote-155) I will also break the *gate* bars[[156]](#footnote-156) of Damascus and cut off the sitting *ruler[[157]](#footnote-157)* from the Valley of Iniquity[[158]](#footnote-158) and the one holding the scepter from Beth-eden,[[159]](#footnote-159) and the people of Aram shall go into exile to Kir,”[[160]](#footnote-160) says Yahweh.

**Against Philistia (1:6-8)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Gaza’s three offences, even on account of *its* four, I shall not revoke its *sentence* because they deported every single captive[[161]](#footnote-161) and handed them over to Edom. Therefore, I shall send a fire against the wall of Gaza, and it shall consume its citadels. And I shall cut off the sitting *ruler* from Ashdod and the one holding the scepter from Ashkelon. I shall turn My hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,” says Adonai Yahweh.

**Against Tyre (1:9-10)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Tyre’s three offences, even on account of *its* four, I will not revoke its *sentence* because they delivered over every single captive to Edom and did not *choose* to take into account *their* covenant with *their* treaty-partners*.*[[162]](#footnote-162)Therefore, I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall consume her citadels.”

**Against Edom (1:11-12)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Edom’s three offences, even on account of *its* four, I will not revoke its *sentence* because he pursued his brother with the sword and suppressed his compassion. His anger tore forever, and *as for* his rage, he held on to it endlessly.[[163]](#footnote-163)Therefore, I will send fire against Teman, and it shall consume the citadels of Bozrah.”

**Against Ammon (1:13-15)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of the Ammonites’ three offences, even because of *their* four, I will not revoke their *sentence* because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to enlarge their territory. Therefore, I shall kindle a fire against the wall of Rabbah, and it will consume her citadels, amid a war cry in the day of *battle,* amid a gale in the time of storm. Their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together,” says Yahweh.

**Against Moab (2:1-3)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Moab’s three offences, even on account of *its* four, I shall not revoke its *sentence* because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.[[164]](#footnote-164) Therefore, I will send a fire against Moab, and it shall consume the citadels of Kerioth. And Moab shall die amid a loud uproar, amid a war cry, and amid the signaling of the ram’s horn.[[165]](#footnote-165) And I shall cut off *her* ruler from the midst of her, and I shall execute all her princes with him,” says Yahweh.

**Against Judah (2:4-5)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Judah’s three offences, even for *its* four*,* I will not revoke its *sentence* because they have rejected the law of Yahweh and they have not kept His statutes. Their false *gods*, which their fathers followed after, have led them astray. Therefore, I will send fire against Judah, and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem.”

**Against Israel (2:6-16)**

Thus says Yahweh, “On account of Israel’s three offences, even on account of *its* four, I will not revoke its *sentence* because they sell the righteous for silver and the poor for sandals. They trample into the dust of the earth the head of the poor and divert the situation of the poor *from receiving justice.*[[166]](#footnote-166)A man and his father go *in* to the *same* girl, resulting in the profaning of My holy name. Also, on garments taken in pledge they stretch out beside every altar, and they drink in the house of their god wine *acquired from* those upon whom they have imposed a fine.[[167]](#footnote-167) Yet I was the one who exterminated from before them the Amorite, whose height was like the height of cedars and whose strength *was* like oak trees. Nevertheless, I destroyed his fruit above and his roots below. And I was the one who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and I led you in the wilderness for forty years in order *for you* to possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up prophets from your sons and Nazirites from your young men.[[168]](#footnote-168) Is this not true, O children of Israel?” *This is* the verdict of Yahweh. “But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and with regard to the prophets, you commanded *them,* saying, Do not prophesy! Behold, I am the one pressing[[169]](#footnote-169) you down like a cart fully *loaded with* grain presses *into the ground.* Therefore, flight will perish from the swift, the strong shall not find strength in his might, and the mighty man shall not escape with his life. The one taking hold of the bow will not stand, the swift on his feet shall not escape, and the one mounted on a horse shall not escape with his life. Even the stout of heart among warriors will flee away naked in that day.” *This is* the verdict of Yahweh.

**Chastisement upon the chosen (3:1-15)**

Hear this word that Yahweh has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole familythat I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying, “Of all the families of the earth, I have chosen[[170]](#footnote-170) *to have a relationship with* only you. Therefore, I will call you to account for all your iniquities.”

Will two walk together if they have not made an appointment *to do so*?[[171]](#footnote-171) Will a lion roar in the forest if he has no prey? Will a young lion raise his voice from his lair if he has not captured *anything?* Will a bird fall into a trap on the ground if it has no snare?[[172]](#footnote-172) Will a trap spring up from the ground if it captured nothing at all? If a trumpet sounds in a city, will not the people tremble?[[173]](#footnote-173) If a calamity happens in a city, did not Yahweh cause it? Indeed, Adonai Yahweh will not carry out an action unless He *first* discloses His plan to His servants, the prophets. A lion has roared—who shall not fear? Adonai Yahweh has spoken—who shall not prophesy?

Announce to the citadels in Ashdod and to the citadels in the land of Egypt and say, “Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria and behold the great panic in its midst and the *acts of* oppression within her.[[174]](#footnote-174) For they—the ones stockpiling violence and destruction[[175]](#footnote-175) in their citadels—do not know *what* actions *are* right.” *This is* the verdict of Yahweh. Therefore, thus says Adonai Yahweh, “An enemy, even one encircling the land, shall pull down your fortifications from you and your citadels shall be plundered.” Thus says Yahweh, “As a shepherd rescues two legs or a piece of an ear from the mouth of a lion thus shall the children of Israel inhabiting Samaria be rescued—with *just* a corner of a bed and the end[[176]](#footnote-176) of a couch. Listen and summon a witness against the house of Jacob.” (*This is* the verdict of Adonai Yahweh, the God of hosts.) “For in the day when I avenge the transgressions of Israel against it, I will bring judgment against the altars of Bethel. And the horns of the altar shall be cut off and they shall fall to the ground. And I shall strike the winter house in addition to the summer house. Ivory houses shall perish, and magnificent houses shall vanish.” (*This is* the verdict of Yahweh.)

**Impenitent still (4:1-13)**

Listen to this word, O cows of Bashan[[177]](#footnote-177) who *live* on Mount Samaria, those who oppress the helpless, crush the poor, *and* say to their misters, “Bring *us more* in order that we may drink.” Adonai Yahweh has sworn by His holiness that, of a certainty,[[178]](#footnote-178) the days will come upon you when someone will carry you away on *meat* hooks[[179]](#footnote-179) and your posterity[[180]](#footnote-180) on fish hooks. And through gaps *in the walls* you shall exit, each one *following the one* in front of her, and you shall be dragged away[[181]](#footnote-181) to Harmon. *This is* the verdict of Yahweh.

Come to Bethel and transgress. *At* Gilgal transgress *even more* greatly. Bring your sacrifices morning by morning and your tithes every three days. Send up in smoke *your* thank offerings with leaven[[182]](#footnote-182) and call *everyone’s attention to* *your* freewill offerings. *Publicly* broadcast *them*! For thus you love *to do,* O children of Israel. *This is* the verdict of Yahweh.

But as for Me,[[183]](#footnote-183) I gave you clean teeth *[i.e., nothing to eat]* in all your cities and a lack of bread in all your places. You still did not return unto Me! *This is* the verdict of Yahweh. I was also the One who withheld rain from you three months before harvest. I would even send rain on one city and prevent it from raining upon another city. One piece of land would be rained upon while *another* piece of land which did not receive rain would dry up. So two *or* three cities would wander to another city to drink water but would not be satiated. You still did not return to Me! *This is* the verdict of Yahweh. I struck your *crops* with scorching and with disease. Locusts frequently consumed your gardens, your vineyards, your fig trees, and your olive trees. You still did not return unto Me! *This is* the verdict of Yahweh. I plagued you with the plagues of Egypt. I killed with the sword both your young men and the horses you had captured. I caused the stench *of corpses[[184]](#footnote-184)* to ascend *from* your camp and into your nostrils. You still did not return unto Me! *This is* the verdict of Yahweh. I toppled your *cities* in like manner to the divine toppling[[185]](#footnote-185) of Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a *smoldering* stick rescued from the fire. You still did not return unto Me! *This is* the verdict of Yahweh.

Therefore, thus will I do to you, O Israel; indeed, because I shall do this to you: Prepare to meet[[186]](#footnote-186) your God, O Israel. For, behold, the One forming the mountains, creating the wind, revealing to man what His plan is,[[187]](#footnote-187) turning darkness into dawn,[[188]](#footnote-188) and treading on the high places of the earth—Yahweh, God of hosts, is His name.

**You could avoid death (5:1-17)**

Listen to this word, a funeral song, which I am lifting up against you, O house of Israel. The virgin of Israel has fallen and will never rise again. She lies abandoned on the ground with no one to lift her up. For thus says Adonai Yahweh, “The city that issues forth with *a force of* one thousand shall end up with *only* one hundred remaining. And the one who issues forth with *a force of* one hundred shall end up with *only* ten remaining of the house of Israel.”

For thus says Yahweh to the house of Israel, “Seek Me and live. But do not seek atBethel and do not go to Gilgal. And do not travel down to Beersheba.[[189]](#footnote-189) For Gilgal shall certainly go into exile and Bethel shall become nothing.”[[190]](#footnote-190) Seek Yahweh and live, lest He blast[[191]](#footnote-191) the house of Joseph like fire, and *the fire* consume Bethel[[192]](#footnote-192) with no one to extinguish *it*—*O you* whoturn justice to wormwood and set aside *the practice of* righteousness in the land! The One who made Pleiades and Orion, the One who turns the darkness to morning and causes the day to darken into night, the One who summons the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the face of the earth—Yahweh is His name—He is the One who flashes destruction upon the strong so that destruction reaches the fortress.[[193]](#footnote-193)

They hate *someone* who arbitrates *justice* in the gate,[[194]](#footnote-194) and they abhor the *person* who speaks honestly. Therefore because you impose rent upon the helpless and you exact from him a grain tax, you will not live in the *fine* houses of dressed stone you have built.[[195]](#footnote-195) You will not drink the wine from the beautiful vineyards you have planted. For I know how many are your transgressions and how numerous are your sins, *you* who oppress the righteous, take bribes, andturn aside in the gate *the case of* the poor. Because it is *such an* evil time, the prudent *among you* choose to keep quiet for the present.

Seek good and not evil in order that you may live—in order that Yahweh, God of hosts, may be with you, just as you have asserted.[[196]](#footnote-196) Hate evil, and love the good, and cause justice to take place in the gate. Perhaps Yahweh, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. Therefore, thus says Yahweh, Adonai God of hosts, “*There shall be* wailing in all the public squares and in all the streets they shall say, Alas! Alas! And they shall summon tenant-farmers to *perform* mourning rituals and *urge to* wailing those skilled at lamentation, and in all vineyards *there shall be* wailing, for I will pass through[[197]](#footnote-197) your midst,” says Yahweh.

**Woe upon the pseudo-religious (5:18-27)**

Woe to those who wish for the Day of Yahweh! What *good* will the Day of Yahweh be to you?[[198]](#footnote-198) It is darkness and not light—as when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him; he then enters his home, leans his hand upon the wall, and a snake bites him. Is not the Day of Yahweh darkness instead of light? And gloom that has no brightness? I hate, I reject your feast *celebrations*, and I do not delight in your festive assemblies. Even if you offer up to Me burnt offerings,[[199]](#footnote-199) I will neither take pleasure in your grain offerings[[200]](#footnote-200) nor regard the peace offerings of your fattened beasts.[[201]](#footnote-201) Remove from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your stringed instruments. Instead, let justice flow like water and righteousness as an ever-flowing stream. During the forty years in the wilderness, did you present Me with sacrifices and offerings, O house of Israel? But *now*, you shall carry[[202]](#footnote-202) Sikkuth, your king, and Kiyyun, your images—your star-gods, which you made for yourselves—and I shall send you into exile further away than Damascus, says Yahweh. The God of hosts is His name.

**Woe upon the wealthy and complacent (6:1-14)**

Woe to those at ease in Zion and to the overconfident[[203]](#footnote-203) in Mount Samaria, those ranked amongthe foremost *men* of the nations,[[204]](#footnote-204) to whom the house of Israel comes.[[205]](#footnote-205) Pass over to Calneh and see. From there, go to Hamath the great. Then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or are their borders greater than your borders, O *you* who thrust *from your thoughts* the *coming* evil day, and bring near *instead* the seat of violence? Those wholie upon ivory beds and sprawl upon their couches and eat young rams from the flock and bull-calves fattened in the stall,[[206]](#footnote-206) *who* make up *songs* to the accompaniment of the harp; like David, they invent for themselves musical instruments,[[207]](#footnote-207) *who* drink wine in basins[[208]](#footnote-208) and anoint themselves with the finest olive oils and do not grieve over the collapse of Joseph. Therefore, they shall now go into exile at the head[[209]](#footnote-209) of the exiles and the feasting of the loungers shall cease.

Adonai Yahweh has sworn by Himself—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh, the God of hosts—I abhor the arrogance of Jacob, and I hate his citadels. Therefore, I shall deliver up the city and everything in it. And it shall be if *but* ten men are left in one house, even they shall die.[[210]](#footnote-210) When his relative picks him up—along with the one[[211]](#footnote-211) who will burn *the corpse—*to carry his bones out from the house and he shall say to whoever is *hiding* in a remote part of the house, “Is *anyone* still *in here* with you?” and *someone* shall reply, “None,” then he shall say, “Silence! For *we must* not invokeYahweh’s name.”[[212]](#footnote-212) For, of a truth, Yahweh will issue the command and reduce *every* large house to rubble and *every* small house to bits.

Will horses run on rock[[213]](#footnote-213) or does one plow *there* with cattle? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.[[214]](#footnote-214) *As for* thosewho gloat over *conquering* Lo-Debar, the ones claiming, “Was it not with our own strength that we took Karnaim for ourselves?” Behold, I will most certainly raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh, the God of hosts—and they shall torment you from Lebo-Hamath until the valley of the Arabah.[[215]](#footnote-215)

**Vision of locust judgment (7:1-3)**

Adonai Yahweh showed me the following: Behold, locusts were forming just when the late grass[[216]](#footnote-216) begins to grow. Furthermore, the late grass was after the mowings *taken by* the king.[[217]](#footnote-217) So it happened, when *the locust swarm* had finished devouring the vegetation of the land, that I said, “Adonai Yahweh, please forgive! How shall Jacob recover since he is *so* small?” Yahweh relented concerning this: “It shall not happen,” says Yahweh.

**Vision of judgment by fire (7:4-6)**

*Then* Adonai Yahweh showed me the following: Behold, Adonai Yahweh was calling for judgment[[218]](#footnote-218) by fire. And it consumed the great deep and devoured the land.[[219]](#footnote-219) And I said, “Adonai Yahweh, please stop! How shall Jacob recover since he is *so* small?” Yahweh relented concerning this: “This also shall not happen,” says Adonai Yahweh.

**Vision of the plumb line (7:7-9)**

He *then* showed me the following: Behold, Adonai was standing before a wall built true to plumb, and in His hand *was* a plumb line.[[220]](#footnote-220) And Yahweh said to me, “What are you seeing, Amos?” And I said, “A plumb line.” And Adonai said, “Of a truth I will place a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel. I shall not spare them again. And the high places of Isaac shall become desolate and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. And I shall rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

**Reponse of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel (7:10-17)**

Now Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to endure all his words. For thus says Amos, ‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall definitely go into exile away from its land.’” And Amaziah said to Amos, “Leave, O seer, take yourself off to the land of Judah, and there eat *your* bread and there do your prophesying. But do not again prophesy at Bethel for it is *both*[[221]](#footnote-221) the king’s sanctuary and the kingdom’s temple.”[[222]](#footnote-222) Then Amos replied and said to Amaziah, “I was not a prophet, nor was I the son of a prophet; to the contrary, I was a herdsman and a caretaker of sycamore-fig trees but Yahweh plucked me from *my* flock and Yahweh said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people, Israel.’

Now, then, hear the word of Yahweh: you are saying, ‘do not prophesy against Israel and do not drivel on[[223]](#footnote-223) against the house of Isaac.’ Therefore, thus says Yahweh, ‘your wife shall practice prostitution in *this* city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword. Your land shall be divided up with a measuring line. You yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel will definitely go into exile away from its land.’”

**Vision of summer fruit (8:1-14)**

Yahweh Adonai showed me the following: A basket of summer fruit. And He said, “What are you seeing, Amos?” And I said, “A basket of summer fruit.” And Yahweh said to me, “The end[[224]](#footnote-224) has *now* come to My people, Israel; I shall not again spare them. *Their* temple songs shall turn to howls in that day” (*this is* the verdict of Adonai Yahweh). The corpses *are* many—flung everywhere—Silence![[225]](#footnote-225)

Hear this, O *you who* are trampling on the poor and getting rid of the afflicted of the land, saying, “When will the new moon be over so that we can *again* sell grain andthe Sabbath so that we can offer wheat for sale, shrinking the ephah, enlarging the shekel, and rigging *our* scales fraudulently,[[226]](#footnote-226) buying the helpless with silver and the poor in exchange for a pair of sandals and selling the *parts* of the grain *typically* swept up *and discarded?*” Yahweh has sworn by the Pride of Jacob *[Himself],* “Be assured, I will never forget all their deeds. On account of this shall not the land tremble and every inhabitant in it mourn, and all of it swell like the Nile and be tossed about and *then* subside like the river of Egypt? And it shall be in that day”—*this is* the verdict of Adonai Yahweh—“that I shall cause the sun to go down at noon and I shall darken the earth during *broad* daylight. And I shall turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into laments. And I will bring sackcloth upon all your loins and baldness upon every head, and I shall make it like the mourning for an only child and its end like a bitter day.”

“Behold days are coming”—*this is* the verdict of Adonai Yahweh—“that I shall send hunger upon the land, not a hunger for bread and not a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of Yahweh. And they shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east. They shall roam about seeking the word of Yahweh and they shall not find it. In that day, beautiful virgins and young men shall faint with thirst. Those swearing by the shame of Samaria who say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan,’ and, ‘As the way of Beersheba lives,’ shall fall and they shall not rise again.

**Vision of Adonai by the altar (9:1-10)**

I saw Adonai standing beside the altar, and He said, “Strike the capitals in order to shake the thresholds and *bring* them[[227]](#footnote-227) crashing down upon everyone’s head. Then, I shall kill with the sword any of them that remain. No one of them fleeing shall be able to flee away, and no one of them who survives shall be able to escape. Though they tunnel[[228]](#footnote-228) through to Sheol, My hand will *still* lay hold of them there, and though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down. Furthermore, though they hide themselves on the top of *Mount* Carmel, I will search *for them* there and lay hold of them. And though they hide at the bottom of the sea far from My eyes, *even* there I will command the *sea* serpent and he shall bite them. Even though they go into captivity before their enemies, *even* there I shall command the sword and it shall kill them, and I shall set My eye against them for evil and not for good.” For Adonai, Yahweh of hosts—He who touches the land and it reels and all of its inhabitants mourn (all of it swells like the Nile and *then* recedes like the river of Egypt); He who builds His upper chambers in the heavens and founds His firmament[[229]](#footnote-229) upon the earth; He who calls for the waters of the sea and *then* pours them out upon the face of the earth—Yahweh is His name!

Are not you, O children of Israel, to Me like the children of Cush? (*This is* the verdict of Yahweh.) Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and Aram from Kir? Of a truth, the eyes of Adonai Yahweh are upon the sinful kingdom, and I shall exterminate it from off the face of the land, except that I shall not completely exterminate the house of Jacob—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh. For, behold, I will command and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations,[[230]](#footnote-230) as *grain* is sifted in a sieve, yet not a *single* pebble will fall to the ground.[[231]](#footnote-231) *Instead,* all the sinners of My people[[232]](#footnote-232) who are saying disaster shall not overtake *us* nor catch us from behind shall be killed with the sword.

**David’s kingdom resurrected (9:11-15)**

“In that day, I shall raise up the fallen[[233]](#footnote-233) booth[[234]](#footnote-234) of David. I shall repair their[[235]](#footnote-235) breaches, and restore his[[236]](#footnote-236) ruins. And I shall rebuild it[[237]](#footnote-237) as in former days. In order that they might possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations called by My name”[[238]](#footnote-238)—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh, the One doing this. “Behold, the days are coming”—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—“that the one plowing will catch up with the one reaping and the one treading grapes the one sowing the seed. And the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow *with it*. And I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel. And they shall rebuild *their* desolate cities, and they shall inhabit *them*. And they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall make gardens and eat their fruit. And I shall plant them in their land, and they shall not again be uprooted from their land that I gave to them,” says Yahweh, your God.

**The Book of Obadiah**

**Coming Destruction of Edom (vv. 1-9)**

*This is* the vision *that came* to Obadiah.

Thus says Adonai Yahweh concerning Edom
(We have heard a report from Yahweh
and a messenger has been sent among the nations,
“Rise up! Let us rise up against her *[Edom]* for battle”),[[239]](#footnote-239)

“Behold, I shall make you insignificant among the nations;
you shall be very despised.[[240]](#footnote-240)
The presumptuousness of your heart has given you false hope—
O dweller in rock hiding places,
*even* in his lofty home—
who says in his heart,
‘Who can bring me down to the earth?’[[241]](#footnote-241)
*Even* if you exalt *yourself* like an eagle
and *even* if your nest is being placed among the stars,
from there I will bring you down.”
(*This is* the verdict of Yahweh.)

“If thieves were to penetrate[[242]](#footnote-242) you,
if destroyers by night—
O how you will be ruined!—
would they not *only* steal that which is sufficient for them?
If grape gatherers were to infiltrate you,
would they not leave gleanings?
O how Esau will be ransacked!
His treasures[[243]](#footnote-243) will be searched out.
All your allies will send you back over the border.[[244]](#footnote-244)
Those at peace with you will deceive you and consume you.
They shall make your bread a trap under you,
without it being known.”

“In that day”—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—
“will I not destroy the wise men from Edom
and *those with* understanding from the mountain of Esau?
And your mighty men, O Teman, shall be filled with terror,
so that every man in the mountain of Esau shall be cut off in the slaughter.”

**Cause of Edom’s Judgment (vv. 10-14)**

“Because of the violence against your brother Jacob,
shame shall cover you
and you shall be cut off forever.
In the day when you stood aside[[245]](#footnote-245)—
in the day when strangers captured their wealth
and foreigners entered their gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem[[246]](#footnote-246)—
you were even like one of them.
Do not gloat[[247]](#footnote-247) in the *calamitous* day of your brother,
in the day of his misfortune.
And do not rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their destruction.
And do not speak proudly
in the day of *their* need.
Do not enter into the gate of my people
in the day of their distress.
Do not look—even you—upon his calamity
in the day of his distress.
And do not take their wealth
in the day of his distress.
And do not stand in the narrow pass
to cut down his fugitives.
And do not deliver up his survivors
in the day of *their* need.”

**Coming Day of the Lord (vv. 15-21)**

“For the day of Yahweh is near upon all the nations.
As you have done it shall be done to you:
your doings shall return upon your head.
For as you have drunk up[[248]](#footnote-248) *My people* upon the mountain of My holiness,
all the nations shall continually drink up *My wrath*.
And they shall drink, and they shall swallow down *My punishment*and they shall be as if they had never been.”

“But in the Mountain of Zion there shall be escape,
and there shall be holiness.
And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.
And the house of Jacob shall be a fire,
and the house of Joseph a flame
 and the house of Esau stubble.
And they shall burn them and they shall consume them,
and there shall not be a survivor to the house of Esau,”
for Yahweh has spoken.

*Those in* the Negev shall possess the mountain of Esau.
*Those in* the Shephelah *the* *place of* thePhilistines;
they shall also possess the field of Ephraim and the field of Samaria.
Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.
And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel
*shall possess* that which *belongs to the* Canaanites as far as Zarephath,
and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad[[249]](#footnote-249)
will possess the cities of the Negev.
And deliverers shall go up on Mount Zion
to judge the mountain of Esau,
and the kingdom shall be Yahweh’s.

**The Book of Jonah**

**Introduction: Jonah refuses to go to Nineveh (1:1-3)**

Now the word of Yahweh came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, Go to the great city, Nineveh, and announce *judgment* against it because their evil has come up before me.”

But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish away from the presence of Yahweh, he went down to Joppa, and he found a ship heading to Tarshish. And he paid its fare, and he boarded it in order to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of Yahweh.

**Jonah thrown overboard (1:4-16)**

Then Yahweh hurled a great wind upon the sea, a great storm came upon the sea, and the ship was about to be broken. And the mariners feared and they cried out, each to his god, and they cast out the articles in the ship into the sea in order to lighten it of *their weight*.[[250]](#footnote-250) But Jonah had gone down to the innermost parts of the ship and had lain down and was in a deep sleep.[[251]](#footnote-251)

And the captain of the ship approached him and said to him, “What are you *doing*, O Sleeper? Arise! Call to your God! Perhaps that[[252]](#footnote-252) God will take notice of us and we will not perish.”

And they said, each to his comrade, “Come, let us cast lots, and let us identify who has caused[[253]](#footnote-253) our great calamity.”

So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

And they said to him, “Explain now to us who has caused our great calamity. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And what people are you from?”

And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear[[254]](#footnote-254) Yahweh, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

Then the men became greatly afraid, and they said to him, “What is it you have done?” (For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of Yahweh because he had mentioned *it* to them.[[255]](#footnote-255))

And they said to him, “What shall we do to you so that the sea might calm down around us?” (For the sea continued to rage.)

And he said to them, “Pick me up and cast me into the sea,[[256]](#footnote-256) and the sea will calm down around you, for I know that this great storm *is* upon you because of me.”

Instead, the men rowed to bring *the ship* back to dry land, but they were not able to because the sea was continually storming against them. So they called out to Yahweh, and they said, “Ah now, Yahweh, please do not let us perish on account of the life of this man and do not hold *his* innocent blood against us, for You, O Yahweh, have done as You have desired.”[[257]](#footnote-257) Then they picked up Jonah and cast him into the sea, and the sea stopped from its raging. Then the men *began to* fear Yahweh greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to Yahweh and made vows.

**Jonah in the great fish (1:17-2:10)**

Now Yahweh prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed[[258]](#footnote-258) to Yahweh, his God, from the fish’s stomach.

And he said, “In the midst of my distress I called out to Yahweh, and He answered me. From Sheol’s belly I cried out and You heard my voice. For You had cast me into the depths in the heart of the seas, and a river had encircled me. All Your breakers and Your waves had passed over me. (As for me, *at that point*, I said, ‘I have been expelled from before your eyes. However, I shall again behold Your holy Temple!’[[259]](#footnote-259)) Waters had encompassed me until *I despaired of my* life, the depths surrounded me, reeds were wound around my head. I had descended to the foundations of the mountains; the earth, with its bars, had closed behind me forever.[[260]](#footnote-260) But You brought my life up from the pit, O Yahweh, my God. When my soul had fainted within me, *that’s when* I remembered[[261]](#footnote-261) Yahweh. And my prayer arrived to You, to Your holy Temple. Those who regard worthless idols forfeit their *hope of* loyal kindness.[[262]](#footnote-262) But as for me, I will sacrifice[[263]](#footnote-263) to you with the voice of thanksgiving; what I have vowed I will repay. Salvation belongs to Yahweh.”[[264]](#footnote-264)

Then Yahweh spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah on dry ground.

**Jonah preaches and Nineveh repents (3:1-10)**

Now the word of Yahweh came to Jonah a second time, saying, “Arise, Go to the great city, Nineveh, and announce to it the proclamation that I am commanding to you.”

So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of Yahweh. Now Nineveh was an extremely large city, a three-day journey *in size*.[[265]](#footnote-265) And Jonah began by going a one-day’s journey into the city. *Along the way,* he would proclaim and say,[[266]](#footnote-266) “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be turned upside down.”

And the men of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the smallest of them. When the news *[Jonah’s message]* reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, removed his cloak, covered *himself with* sackcloth, and sat upon ashes. And he made a proclamation in Nineveh and said by decree of the king and of his nobles, saying, “Let neither man, animal, cattle nor flock taste anything. Neither let them graze or drink water. Instead, let both man and beast cover themselves, let them cry out to God mightily, and let them repent, every man *of them,*  from their evil way and from the violence that *is* in their hands. Who knows *whether* God might still relent and turn from the heat of His anger so that we not perish?”

And God saw their works—that they turned from their evil way—and God relented regarding the calamity that He had promised to do to them and He did *it* not.

**Jonah upset by God’s mercy upon Nineveh (4:1-5)**

But it displeased Jonah greatly, and he became angry. And he prayed to Yahweh and said, “Ah now, Yahweh, is not this *exactly* what I said when I was still in my land? The very reason I fled previously to Tarshish *was* because I knew that you *are* a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in loyal kindness, and one who relents regarding calamity *He has promised to bring*. So now, Yahweh, please take my life from me, for dying is more preferable to me than living.”

And Yahweh said, “Do you have a right to be angry?”

And Jonah went out from the city and sat to the east of the city. And he made for himself a shelter and sat under it in itsshade until he saw what would happen to the city.

**Conclusion: Yahweh’s right to spare Nineveh (4:6-11)**

Now Yahweh God prepared a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head in order to deliver him from his misery, and Jonah was extremely gladdened by the plant. Then God prepared a worm at dawn of the next day, and it struck the plant and it withered. So it was, when the sun shone, that God prepared a scorching east wind, and the sun shone upon the head of Jonah and he fainted.

And he wished *in* himself to die, and he said, “Dying is more preferable to me than living.”

And God said to Jonah, “Do you have a right to be angry over the plant?”

And he said, “I have a right to be angry, *even* to the point of death.”

And Yahweh said, “As for you, you felt troubled about the plant upon which you did not labor and which you did not cause to grow, which came into existence overnight and perished overnight. As for Me, should not I feel troubled over the great city, Nineveh, in which there are more than 120,000[[267]](#footnote-267) people who cannot discern their right hand from their left, and *also* much cattle?”

**The Book of Micah**

**Introduction (1:1)**

*This is* the word of Yahweh that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

**Yahweh issues forth in judgment (1:2-4)**

Hear, O peoples, all of you! Take heed, O earth and its fullness! Let Adonai Yahweh be a witness against you, Adonai from His holy Temple. For, behold, Yahweh is coming forth from His place, and He shall go down and tread upon the high places of the land. And the mountains shall melt under themselves and the valleys shall be split like wax in front of a fire, like water being poured out down a slope.

**Samaria’s wound knocks on Jerusalem’s door (1:5-9)**

All of this is because of the transgression of Jacob and because of the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the high place[[268]](#footnote-268) of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? Therefore, I will make Samaria a heap of rubble in the field *and* a place to plant a vineyard. And I shall tumble her stones down into the valley, and I shall uncover her foundations. All her idols shall be broken in pieces, and all her harlot’s wages[[269]](#footnote-269) shall be burned with fire. And I shall make all her images a desolation. Because she gathered *them* from a harlot’s wage, unto a harlot’s wage they shall return. Therefore, I will mourn and wail. I will go[[270]](#footnote-270) barefoot and naked. I will lament like the jackals and mourn like owls.[[271]](#footnote-271) Because her[[272]](#footnote-272) wound is incurable, because it has come to Judah—he[[273]](#footnote-273) has reached as far as the gate of my people, as far as Jerusalem.

**Judgment falls on Judah’s cities (1:10-16)**

Do not announce *it* in Gath.[[274]](#footnote-274) Do not weep at all. In Beth-le-aphrah, let her roll herself[[275]](#footnote-275) in the dust.[[276]](#footnote-276) Go off[[277]](#footnote-277) in shameful nakedness, O inhabitant of Shaphir.[[278]](#footnote-278) The inhabitant of Zaanan shall not issue forth *[in battle]*.[[279]](#footnote-279) Beth-Ezel[[280]](#footnote-280) mourns *and* withholds from you[[281]](#footnote-281) his *customary* refuge.[[282]](#footnote-282) Indeed, the inhabitant of Maroth[[283]](#footnote-283) writhes in pain *waiting* for deliverance but disaster from Yahweh has come down to the gate of Jerusalem. Harness the chariot to swift horses,[[284]](#footnote-284) O inhabitant of Lachish (she was the beginning of sin to the house of Zion), because in you the transgressions of Israel were found.[[285]](#footnote-285) Therefore,[[286]](#footnote-286) you[[287]](#footnote-287) shall give parting gifts on behalf of Moresheth-Gath. The houses of Achzib[[288]](#footnote-288) will become a disappointment[[289]](#footnote-289) to the kings of Israel. I shall again bring against you, O inhabitant of Mareshah, the one who will take possession.[[290]](#footnote-290) The glory *[i.e., the leaders]* of Israel will head for Adullam.[[291]](#footnote-291) Shave yourself[[292]](#footnote-292) bald and cut off *your hair* on behalf of the children of your delight.[[293]](#footnote-293) Enlarge your baldness like the eagle for they shall go away from you into exile.

**Crimes of oppression (2:1-5)**

Woe to those devising mischief and plotting evil on their beds. When morning dawns, they carry it out because their hands have the power *to do so*.[[294]](#footnote-294) They crave fields and they seize *them*; houses also, and they take them away. Thus, they oppress a man and his house, a man also and his inheritance. Therefore, thus says Yahweh, “Behold I am devising an evil[[295]](#footnote-295) against this family from which you shall not be able to remove your necks. You shall walk proudly no longer, for it will be a time of evil. In that day one shall take up a proverb about you and shall utter a bitter lament,saying,[[296]](#footnote-296) ‘We have been completely devastated. He trades away the portion of my people. How He removes it from me! He apportions our fields to the faithless.’ Therefore, you shall not have one casting a measuring line by lot in the congregation of Yahweh.”[[297]](#footnote-297)

**The oppressors and their prophets (2:6-11)**

 “Do not speak on[[298]](#footnote-298) *like this*”—they *[the false prophets]* speak. *Since, however,* they[[299]](#footnote-299) will not speak about these things*,* disgrace will not be turned back. Should it be said, O house of Jacob, “Does the Spirit of Yahweh grow impatient” or “Are these His deeds?” Are not My words good to the one who walks uprightly? But of late, My people frontally assault *their fellow man* like an enemy; you forcibly strip off splendid garments from passersby *who are as* unsuspecting *as* thosereturning from battle. You drive out the women of My people from their comfortable houses; from their children you take My splendor[[300]](#footnote-300) forever. Rise up and go away, for this is not a resting place.[[301]](#footnote-301) Because she became defiled, she will be destroyed and her destruction will be painful. If a man walking in wind and deception, had told a lie, *saying,* “I shall preach to you about wine and about strong drink,” even he should be the prophet of this people.

**A Conqueror regathers and returns with the remnant (2:12-13)**

I will surely assemble you, O Jacob, all of you. I shall certainly gather the remnant of Israel together. I shall make him as the flock of Bozrah, as a flock noisily crowded with people in the middle of its pasturage. He who will breach[[302]](#footnote-302) *the gate* goes up before them. They break through. They pass through the gate, and they go out of it.[[303]](#footnote-303) Their king passes over before them, even Yahweh at their head.

**A message for corrupt political leaders (3:1-4)**

And I said, Hear now, O heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel. Is not a knowledge of that which is just your prerogative—*you* who hate good and love evil, who tear the skin off of *my people* and the flesh from their bones, who also consume the flesh of my people, strip their skin from them, break their bones in pieces, and chop *them* up like that which is *put* in a pot and like flesh in the midst of a cauldron? Then they shall cry out to Yahweh but He shall not answer them. Instead, He shall hide His face from them at that time because their deeds are evil.

**A word to the false prophets (3:5-8)**

Thus says Yahweh concerning the prophets who lead My people astray, who proclaim peace *when given something to* bite with their teeth, and who declare a holy war against him who does not give *something* for their mouth. Therefore, night shall come upon you instead of prophetic vision, and it shall be too dark for you to practice divination. The sun shall set upon *these* prophets, and the day shall grow dark upon them. The seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners shall be put to shame. All of them shall cover their mouths[[304]](#footnote-304) *in shame* because there is no reply from God. As for me, however, I am full of the power of the Spirit of Yahweh, of justice, and of might in order to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

**Zion’s leaders rebuked as the cause of its destruction (3:9-12)**

Listen now to this, O heads of the house of Jacob and leaders of the house of Israel, those abhorring justice and perverting all that is right, building Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with wickedness. Whose leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets divine for silver. Who *all the while* lean themselves upon Yahweh saying, “Is not Yahweh in our midst? Harm shall not befall us.” Therefore, because of you, Zion shall become a plowed field, Jerusalem a heap of rubble, and the Temple Mount a wooded hill.

**Jerusalem central in future kingdom (4:1-8)**

But it shall be in the last days *that* the mountain of the house[[305]](#footnote-305) of Yahweh shall be established at the head of the mountains, and it shall be raised up above the hills. And the peoples shall stream into it. And many nations shall come and shall say, “Come and let us go up to the mount of Yahweh and to the house of the God of Jacob so that He might teach us His ways and we might walk in His paths.” For the Law shall go forth from Zion, and the Word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between many peoples, and He shall settle disputes between far-away, mighty nations. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning knives. A nation shall not lift up a sword against *another* nation, and they shall not train for war anymore.

But *every* man shall live under his vine and under his fig tree with no one to frighten *them—*for the mouth of Yahweh of hosts has spoken. Even if all the peoples shall walk, each in the name of his god, we will walk in the name of Yahweh our God forever and ever. In that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—I shall gather the lame, and I shall assemble the scattered and those upon whom I have brought calamity. And I shall make the lame into a remnant and the outcast into a mighty nation, and Yahweh shall reign over them in Mount Zion from then on, even for all time. And you, O Tower of the Flock, the fortified hill[[306]](#footnote-306) of the daughter of Zion, it shall come to you, even the former dominion, the kingdom that belongs to the daughter of Jerusalem, shall come.

**Jerusalem’s present pains (4:9-5:1)**

Now, why do you shout loudly—is there no king in you? Or *is it because* your counselor[[307]](#footnote-307) has perished that pangs have seized you like a woman giving birth? Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, as a woman giving birth. For now you shall leave the city; you shall dwell in the open field and you shall go to Babylon. There you will be rescued. There Yahweh shall redeem you from the hand of your enemies. But now, many nations have been gathered against you, *who are* saying, Let her be defiled so that our eyes may gloat over Zion. But as for them, they do not know the thoughts of Yahweh, and they do not understand His plan. For He has gathered them together to the threshing floor like sheaves. Rise up and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I shall make your horn iron and your hooves bronze, and you shall pulverize many peoples. And you shall dedicate[[308]](#footnote-308) to Yahweh their riches and their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.[[309]](#footnote-309)

*But for* now, muster[[310]](#footnote-310) yourself, O daughter of troops; he[[311]](#footnote-311) has set up a siege against us. He shall strike with a rod the ruler of Israel upon the cheek.

**Coming Davidic Shepherd (5:2-6)**

But you, O Bethlehem Ephratah, little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one shall come forth to be a ruler in Israel for Me. His goings forth[[312]](#footnote-312) are from of old, from time immemorial. [[313]](#footnote-313) Therefore, He shall give them up for a time until the one pregnant with child gives birth.[[314]](#footnote-314) Then the rest of His[[315]](#footnote-315) brothers shall return together with the sons of Israel. Then He shall stand and feed in the strength of Yahweh and in the majesty of the name of Yahweh, His God. And they shall abide, for now He will be great unto the ends of the earth. And this One shall be *our* peace. As for Assyria,[[316]](#footnote-316) if he enters into our land and treads on our citadels, then we will raise up against him seven shepherds, even eight princely men.[[317]](#footnote-317) And they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword and the land of Nimrod at its entrances,[[318]](#footnote-318) and He shall deliver from Assyria if (ever) he should invade our land or tread within our borders.

**The future remnant of Jacob (5:7-15)**

And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew from Yahweh, like mild rains upon grass, which do not wait for a man nor delay[[319]](#footnote-319) for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among nations—in the midst of many peoples—like a lion among the animals of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep and goats which, if he passes through, will trample and tear in pieces and none shall deliver. Your hand shall be lifted up against your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut off.

And it shall be in that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—that I shall cut off your horses from your midst and destroy your chariots. And I shall cut off the cities of your land and demolish all your fortresses. And I shall cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall no longer have fortunetellers. And I shall cut off your idols and your stone pillars[[320]](#footnote-320) from your midst, and you shall not again worship the work of your hands. And I shall uproot your Asherah poles from your midst and destroy your cities. And I shall wreak vengeance in anger and in wrath upon the nations which did not obey.

**A day in court—Yahweh’s accusation (6:1-5)**

Hear now that which Yahweh is saying. Rise up! Plead with the mountains. And let the hills hear your voice. Listen, O mountains, to the court case of Yahweh, and, O enduring foundations of the earth, for Yahweh has a court case with His people and He shall argue it out together with Israel. O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Give me an answer! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and I redeemed you from the house of slavery. And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O My people, remember now what Balak, the king of Moab, planned and how Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him. *Remember also* from Shittim until Gilgal[[321]](#footnote-321) in order *for you* to acknowledge the loyal acts[[322]](#footnote-322) of Yahweh.

**A day in court—the neglected requirement (6:6-8)**

With what shall I approach Yahweh *or* bow before the high God? Shall I approach Him with burnt offerings *or* with yearling calves? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams *or* with countless streams of oil? Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression? The fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man,[[323]](#footnote-323) what is good. In fact, what is Yahweh seeking from you except to work justice, to love loyalty,[[324]](#footnote-324) and to walk humbly with your God.

**A day in court—the divine verdict (6:9-16)**

The voice of Yahweh calls to the city—and the *person with* sound wisdom regards Your name—“Listen to the rod and *to Him* who appointed it.” Is there still the house of the wicked with *its* ill-gotten treasures *acquired via* the scanty, accursed ephah? Shall I acquit *you* with regard to your dishonest scales and *your* bags of deceitful weights? Her rich men are filled with violence and her inhabitants speak lies; their tongues in their mouths are deceitful.

Therefore, I will seriously wound *you* by striking you, making *you* desolate because of your sins. You shall eat and not be satisfied; instead, you shall have hunger in your midst. You shall carry off but shall not be able to bring *it* to safety. And whatever you do manage to bring to safety, I shall give it to the sword. You shall sow but not reap. You shall tread the olive but not anoint yourself with oil. *You shall squeeze out* fresh grape extract, but shall not drink wine.You carefully observed the statutes of Omri and all the work of the house of Ahab and walked in their counsels; on account of this, I will make you a horror, her inhabitants *shall become* a hissing, and you shall bear the disgrace of My people.

**Micah laments the nation’s hopeless wickedness (7:1-6)**

Woe is me for I have become like when the summer fruits have been harvested and the grape harvest gleaned. There is no grape-cluster to eat, *nor* early figs *like* my soul desires. The faithful person has been destroyed from the land, and there are no upright among men. All of them lie in ambush to shed blood. Each hunts his brother *with* a drag-net. With regard to that which is evil, both hands do it well. *Both* ruler and judge ask for a bribe. As for the great man, he utters the evil desire of his soul. They[[325]](#footnote-325) then plot together *to accomplish* it. The best among them *are* like a thorn-bush, and the *most* upright *like* a thorn-hedge.

The day your watchmen *were on guard against*—*the day of* your punishment—has come. Now shall be your confusion. Do not rely on a neighbor. Do not trust a close friend. Guard the doors of your mouth from the female sleeping in your bosom.[[326]](#footnote-326) For a son treats *his* father disdainfully, a daughter rises up against her mother *and* a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man’s enemies are the people of his own household.

**Micah will wait in hope (7:7-13)**

But as for me, I will watch expectantly for Yahweh. I am determined[[327]](#footnote-327) to wait on the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Do not let my enemy rejoice over me. When I fall, I shall arise. When I sit in darkness, Yahweh *will give* me light. I will bear the rage of Yahweh, because I have sinned against Him, until He has settled my case and performed what is just for me. He shall bring me out to the light. I shall behold His righteousness.

Then my enemy shall see and shame shall cover her[[328]](#footnote-328) who said to me, “Where is Yahweh, your God?” My eyes shall behold her *downfall*. Now she *shall be* trampled down, like mud in the streets. A day to build your city walls. *In* that day, your borders shall extend far. It is a day when they shall come to you from Assyria and *from* the cities of Egypt, even from Egypt to the Euphrates, from sea to sea, and *from* mountain to mountain. But *first* the land shall become a desolation because of its inhabitants, on account of the fruit of their deeds.

**Micah’s parting prayer request (7:14)**

Shepherd Your people with Your rod, the flock of Your inheritance, who dwell by themselves in a forest in the midst of an orchard. May Bashan and Gilead graze as in the days of old!

**God’s answer (7:15-17)**

As the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show him wonderful things. Nations shall see and they shall be ashamed of all their mighty deeds. They shall place a hand upon the mouth. They will make their ears deaf.[[329]](#footnote-329) They shall lick up dust like a snake. They shall tremble out of their holes like that which crawls on the ground. With trepidation they shall approach Yahweh, our God, and they shall be afraid of You.

**A final burst of praise (7:18-20)**

Who is a God like You, who takes away iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? He does not hold onto His anger forever because He delights in loyal kindness. He shall again have compassion upon us. He shall subdue our iniquities. You shall hurl all their sins into the depths of the sea.You shall extend the faithfulness to Jacob and *the* loyal kindness to Abraham, which You swore to our fathers long ago.

**The Book of Nahum**

**Introduction (1:1)**

*What follows is* a divinepronouncement[[330]](#footnote-330) against Nineveh, the book ofthe vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.[[331]](#footnote-331)

**A threefold poetic description of Yahweh (1:2-8)**

Yahweh is a jealous and avenging God.

Yahweh takes vengeance and is the owner of wrath.

Yahweh takes vengeance against His enemies,

and He maintains *His wrath* against His adversaries.

Yahweh is longsuffering and great in strength,
and He does not acquit *innocent people*.
His way is in the storm and in the gale,
and the clouds are the dust of His feet.
He rebukes the sea and dries it up,
and all the rivers run dry.
Bashan and Carmel,
and the budding blossom of Lebanon, wither *also*.
The mountains quake because of Him,
and the hills come apart.
The earth heaves in His presence,
even the world and all its inhabitants.
Who can stand before His indignation?
And who will endure the fierceness of His anger?
His wrath gushes forth like fire,
and the rocks are shattered before Him.

Yahweh is good,
a stronghold in the day of distress,
and He knows those who take refuge in Him;
but with an overflowing torrent,
He shall end her existence[[332]](#footnote-332)
and pursue His enemies *into* darkness.

**Nineveh’s demise—good news for God’s people (1:9-15**[[333]](#footnote-333)**)**

What will you devise against Yahweh?
He will make *you* a complete end.
Distress will not come *to you* a second time.[[334]](#footnote-334)
Although[[335]](#footnote-335) *like* an *impenetrable[[336]](#footnote-336)* thorn bushor like drunkards *engrossed* with their drink,[[337]](#footnote-337)
they will be consumed like fully-dry stubble.[[338]](#footnote-338)
From you *[Nineveh]* one who plots evil against Yahweh,
a wicked counselor,
has issued forth.

Thus says Yahweh,
“Even if *their army* is both intact and numerous,
they will be cut off and pass away.
Although I had afflicted you,[[339]](#footnote-339)
I shall not afflict you again.
But now, I shall break his yoke off of you
and snap your fetters.”

Yahweh has commanded concerning you:[[340]](#footnote-340)
“There will no longer be any posterity to carry on your name;[[341]](#footnote-341)
I will cut off idol and image[[342]](#footnote-342)
from the house of your gods.
I will prepare your grave
because you are contemptible.”

Behold, upon the mountains
the feet of him who brings good tidings,
who proclaims peace.
Hold your festivals, O Judah.
Pay your vows.
For *this* wicked[[343]](#footnote-343) one *[Assyria]* will not again pass over you
*but* shall be entirely cut off.

**Nineveh’s attackers arrive and triumph (2:1-7)**

He who will scatter *you* has come up before your face.
Guard the fortification.
Watch the path.
Strengthen the loins.
Rally all your strength.

For Yahweh is restoring the majesty of Jacob,
even[[344]](#footnote-344) the majesty of Israel.
For ravagers have ravaged them
 and laid waste their branches.

The shield of his warriors has been dyed red.
The mighty men are clothed in scarlet.[[345]](#footnote-345)
The chariots *glisten like* fiery metal
on the day of their[[346]](#footnote-346) preparation.
The spears[[347]](#footnote-347) are brandished.
The chariots run like mad[[348]](#footnote-348) in the streets.
They race around in the public squares.
They *flame[[349]](#footnote-349)* liketorches;
they dart about like flashes of lightning.
He thinks about his officers.
They stumble in their marching.
They hurry toward her wall.
The mantelet[[350]](#footnote-350) is readied.[[351]](#footnote-351)

The river gates are opened
and the palace disintegrates.[[352]](#footnote-352)
Thus, it has been decreed:
She will be taken into exile.[[353]](#footnote-353)
She will be carried away.
Her slave girls sob with a sound like doves
*and* beat continually upon their breasts.

**Nineveh, the plunderer, is herself plundered (2:8-13)**

As for Nineveh—like a pool of water[[354]](#footnote-354) throughout its history[[355]](#footnote-355)—
now *its inhabitants* flee away.[[356]](#footnote-356)
“Stop! Stop!”
But no one turns to listen.
Plunder the silver!
Plunder the gold!
There is no end to the treasure,
the wealth from all her desirable objects.
Emptiness, desolation, and devastation!
The heart melts, knees shake,
and *there is* trembling in every midsection.
The faces of all grow pale.

Where is the den of lions,[[357]](#footnote-357)
the pasture for the young lions,
where a lion, a lioness, and a whelp[[358]](#footnote-358) would go
and no one would frighten *them*,
*where* the lion tore enough prey for his cubs
and strangled[[359]](#footnote-359) *prey* for his lionesses,
where his lairs[[360]](#footnote-360) were full of prey,
and his dens with torn flesh?

“Behold, I am against you”[[361]](#footnote-361)—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts—“and I shall burn to ashes her chariots. The sword shall devour your young lions, and I shall cut off your prey from the land, and the voice of your messengers shall not be heard again.”

**Nineveh’s coming destruction is a divine punishment (3:1-7)**

Woe to the bloody city,
completely full of lies and plunder,
*whose* prey never departs.

The crack of a whip.
The sound of a wheel rattling.
A horse gallops,
and the chariot leaps forward.
The charioteer[[362]](#footnote-362) charges.
The blade of a sword,
and the flashing of a spear.
Multitudes of slain,
and piles of corpses,
and no end to the dead.
*People* stumble over their dead bodies.
*All this* because of the multitude of the harlotries of the harlot,
the charmingly fairmistress of sorceries,
who enslaves nations with her harlotries
and peoples[[363]](#footnote-363) with her sorceries.

“Behold, I am against you”—
*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts.
“Therefore, I will uncover your skirts before your face.
I will show the nations your nakedness
and the kingdoms your shame.
And I will throw filth[[364]](#footnote-364) on you
and treat you contemptuously.
And I shall make you a spectacle. And it shall be *that* all who see you
shall flee from you and will say,
‘Nineveh has been laid waste. Who will grieve[[365]](#footnote-365)for her?’
Where shall I seek comforters for you?”

**Nineveh no more unassailable than Thebes was (3:8-13)**

Are you better than *the city of* Thebes,
which sat beside the Nile,
*with* water surrounding her,
whose rampart was the sea
and her wall was next to the sea?
Cush was her strength,
and Egypt was without end.
Put and the Libyans were among your helpers.
*Nevertheless,* she also went into exile.
She went into captivity.
Her children were also dashed to pieces
at the head of all the streets.
They cast lots for her honored ones,
and all her dignitaries were bound with fetters.
Likewise,[[366]](#footnote-366) you shall be drunk.[[367]](#footnote-367)
You shall hide.
You shall seek a place of safety from the enemy.
All your fortifications will be *like* fig trees
with early fruit:
when shaken,
they fall into the mouth of the eater.
Behold, your people in your midst are women.
The gates of your land are wide open before your enemies.
Fire consumes your *city* gate-bars.

**Nineveh’s resistance is futile—celebrate her end! (3:14-19)**

 Draw for yourself water for a time of siege.
Strengthen your fortifications.
Go into the clay
and tread the mortar.
Take hold of the brick mold.
Fire shall consume you there.
A sword shall cut you off.
It shall consume you as the young locust[[368]](#footnote-368) *does*.

Multiply as the young locust.
Multiply as the locust.[[369]](#footnote-369)
(You have increased your merchants
more than the stars of heaven.)
The young locust[[370]](#footnote-370) has stripped *the land*
and flown away.
Your courtiers are like the locust,
and your officials are like a swarm of locusts.[[371]](#footnote-371)
*They* encamp on the walls on a cold day.
The sun rises, and they flee.
And the place where they are is not known.[[372]](#footnote-372)

Your shepherds have fallen asleep, O king of Assyria,
and your prominent ones have lain down to rest.
Your people are scattered upon the mountains,
and no one gathers *them*.
There is no healing for your injury.
Your wound is incurable.
All who hear *this* report concerning you
shall clap *their* hands over you,
for upon whom has your evil not passed continually?

**The Book of Habakkuk**

**Introduction (1:1)**

*This is* the divine pronouncement that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

**Habakkuk’s prayer of frustration at unchecked injustice and iniquity (1:2-4)**

How long, Yahweh, shall I cry for help and you not listen? I call out to you, “Violence,” but you do not save. Why have you shown me injustice and made me behold trouble? Plundering[[373]](#footnote-373) and violence are before me. Conflict exists, and quarrelingflourishes;[[374]](#footnote-374) therefore, the Law has grown cold and justice never issues forth. Since the wicked surround the righteous, that is why justice issues forth perverted.

**God’s answer is to send the Chaldeans (1:5-11)**

Behold the nations. Take a look*.* Gaze upon them *and* be astonished. For *I am* working a work in your days that you will not believe even if it is reported *to you*. For, behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, a fierce nation and impetuous. They walk the breadth of the earth to take possession of dwelling-places which are not theirs. They are terrifying and fear-inspiring. Their *sense of* justice and dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards and more menacing than evening wolves; their horses paw the ground. Their horses come from afar; they fly like an eagle swooping swiftly to consume *its prey*. All of them come to *wreak* violence. All their faces *push* forward. They amass captives like the sand. They make fun of kings, and dignitaries *only* amuse them. They laugh at every fortification; they heap up earth and capture it. Then *his* spirit changes.[[375]](#footnote-375) He transgresses and incurs guilt.[[376]](#footnote-376) This—his strength—is his god.

**Habakkuk’s prayer of confusion at God’s using the wicked Chaldeans (1:12-2:1)**

Are You not from everlasting, Yahweh, my God, my Holy One? We shall not die.[[377]](#footnote-377) You, O Yahweh, have appointed him to *wreak* justice. And You, O Rock, have appointed him to reprimand. *You whose* eyes are too pure to behold evil and are unable to look at wrong behavior. Why do You look at the faithless *and* do nothing when the wicked swallow up the one who is more righteous than he? You have caused mankind *to become* *prey* like fish[[378]](#footnote-378) of the sea, like *sea* crawlers[[379]](#footnote-379) that no one cares for. He catches all[[380]](#footnote-380) up with a fish-hook. He drags them out[[381]](#footnote-381) with his drag-net, and gathers them into his fishing net. He then rejoices and shouts with joy. Because of this, he sacrifices to his drag-net and offers incense to his fishing net.[[382]](#footnote-382) For through their use, his catch is large[[383]](#footnote-383) and his food plenteous. Shall he empty out his drag-net in this manner[[384]](#footnote-384) and continually slaughter the nations without mercy? I will stand at my post and position myself on *my* watch tower to see what He will say to me and how I should respond to my complaint.

**God’s answer to the righteous (2:2-4)**

Then Yahweh answered me and said, Write the vision, and record *it* very clearly upon the tablet so that he who reads it can run *while doing so*. For the vision’s appointed time is still *future*. Nevertheless, it will strive[[385]](#footnote-385) for fulfillment and not disappoint. If it tarries, wait for it, for it will certainly come. It will not delay long. Behold his soul is proud *and* is not upright in him, but the righteous will live by his steadfast trust.[[386]](#footnote-386)

**God answers with woes upon the unrighteous (2:5-20)**

Moreover, wine betrays the arrogant man and he finds no rest. He expands his appetite like Sheol; he is like death *in that* he is not satisfied. He gathers to himself all nations and amasses all peoples for himself. Will not all these lift up against him a mock-song and a taunt riddle and say, “Woe to the one who heaps up that which is not his—for how long?—and enriches himself with pledges”?[[387]](#footnote-387) Shall not your creditors suddenly rise up and those who make you tremble[[388]](#footnote-388) awaken? Then you shall become booty for them. Because you yourself plundered many nations, all surviving peoples will plunder you—because of human bloodshed and violence on the earth, *committed against* cities and all their inhabitants.

Woe to him who for the sake of his *own* house acquires ill-gotten gain in order to set his nest on high *and* escape the hand of disaster. You have planned shame for your house: *in* cutting off many peoples, *you* have actually done yourself a disservice.[[389]](#footnote-389) For a stone cries out from the wall, and a rafter from the timberwork answers.

Woe to the one building a city by means of bloodshed and establishing a town through injustice. Indeed is it not *decreed* by Yahweh of hosts that peoples weary themselves for fire[[390]](#footnote-390) and nations exhaust themselves for nothing? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.[[391]](#footnote-391)

Woe to the one who gives his neighbor drink! *You* mix *it* with your venom[[392]](#footnote-392) and make *him* drunk in order to look at his nakedness. You will be satiated with shame instead of glory. Drink—even you—and be exposed![[393]](#footnote-393) The cup of the right hand of Yahweh will come around to you, and disgrace upon your glory. For the violence *perpetrated on* Lebanon shall cover you, as will also the cruelty *carried out on* thebeasts that terrified them—because of human bloodshed and violence upon the earth *committed against* cities and their inhabitants.

Of what use is the carved idol whose maker carved it? *It is* a cast image and a fake guide.[[394]](#footnote-394) For by making idols that cannot speak, the maker trusts what he has himself made. Woe to the one who says to a piece of wood, “Awake!,” *or* to a silent stone, “Rouse yourself!” Will it impart instruction?[[395]](#footnote-395) Behold, it is overlaidwith gold and silver, but there is no breath in it. As for Yahweh, *He is* in His holy Temple. Be silent before Him all the earth.[[396]](#footnote-396)

**Habakkuk’s psalm of praise and faith (3:1-19)**

The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.

Upon Shigionoth.[[397]](#footnote-397)

I have heard, O Yahweh, the *past* reports[[398]](#footnote-398) concerning you. I am in awe, O Yahweh, with regard to your working *in the past*. In the midst of the *coming* years, do it again. In the midst of the *coming* years, reveal *it again*. In *these coming years of* tumult, remember to show compassion.

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.

Selah.

His majesty covered the heavens and His renown filled the earth. And His radiance was like light. Rays *flashed* from his hands, where He veils[[399]](#footnote-399) His strength.[[400]](#footnote-400) Plague went before Him, and pestilence proceeded from His feet. He stood and the earth shook.[[401]](#footnote-401) He looked and made the nations tremble. Ancient mountains were shattered. Age-old hills stooped. His ways[[402]](#footnote-402) are everlasting. I beheld the tents of Cushan[[403]](#footnote-403) under distress. The tent curtains of the land of Midian trembled. Did Yahweh become angry at the rivers? Was Your wrath against the rivers or Your rage against the sea when You rode upon Your horses, on Your chariots of deliverance? Your bow was fully unsheathed. It was a decree: You have vowed shafts[[404]](#footnote-404) *for the enemy*.[[405]](#footnote-405)

Selah.

You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You. They writhed. A downpour of waters swept by. The deep lifted its voice. It lifted its hands up high.[[406]](#footnote-406) The sun *and* the moon stood in their habitation. They went away at the flash of Your arrows, at the lightening-like gleam of Your spears. With fury You trod the earth; in anger You trampled the nations. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for the salvation of Your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the transgressor *and* laid bare the foundation unto the neck.

Selah.

You pierced the head of his warriors with his own shafts. They stormed like a whirlwind to scatter me. Their gloating *was* like one who devours the poor secretly. You marched Your horses through the sea, *with its* great, foaming waters.

I heard, and my belly trembled. My lips quivered at the sound. Rottenness entered into my bones, and my insides shook because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, for the attack of the people *who* will invade us. Although the fig tree not blossom nor produce be in the vines, the yield of the olive fail or the cultivated fields yield no food, one cut off the flock from the animal pen and no cattle be in the stalls; nonetheless, I will exult in Yahweh. I will shout with joy to the God of my salvation. Yahweh Adonai *is* my strength, and He has made my feet like the deer’s. He enables me to tread upon my high places.

To the chief musician upon my stringed instruments.

**The Book of Zephaniah**

**Introduction (1:1)**

The word of Yahweh that came to Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah,[[407]](#footnote-407) in the days of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah.

**Sweeping universal judgment (1:2-3)**

I will bring a sweeping end[[408]](#footnote-408) to everything on the face of the earth—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh.[[409]](#footnote-409) I will bring an end to mankind and beast. I will bring an end to the birds of the heaven and the fish of the sea and to the rubble along with the wicked.[[410]](#footnote-410) And I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh.

**No escape for Judah or Jerusalem (1:4-13)**

And I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I shall cut off from this place *every* vestige of Baal, the name of the *chemarim*-priests[[411]](#footnote-411) along with the *other* priests, the ones bowing down on the housetops to the host of heaven, the worshipers *who* swear allegiance to both Yahweh and their “King,”[[412]](#footnote-412) and those who have turned back from Yahweh and who do not seek Yahweh or pursue[[413]](#footnote-413) Him.

Be silent before Adonai Yahweh for the day of Yahweh is near, for Yahweh has made ready a sacrifice *and* has consecrated those He has invited. And it shall be in the day of Yahweh’s sacrifice that I will punish the princes, the king’s sons, and all who wear foreign clothing.[[414]](#footnote-414) On that day, I will punish all who jump over the threshold,[[415]](#footnote-415) who fill the house of their masters with violence and fraud.

And it shall be on that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—a voice of crying from the Fish Gate[[416]](#footnote-416) and wailing from the Second Quarter,[[417]](#footnote-417) a great collapse from “The Hills.”[[418]](#footnote-418) Wail, O inhabitants of Maktesh,[[419]](#footnote-419) for all the merchants[[420]](#footnote-420) have ceased to exist; all vendors[[421]](#footnote-421) have been cut off. And at that time it shall be *that* I will diligently search out Jerusalem with lamps. And I shall punish the men who are settled on their lees,[[422]](#footnote-422) who say in their hearts, “Yahweh shall do neither good nor evil.”[[423]](#footnote-423) And their wealth shall become plunder, and their houses a desolation. They shall build houses but not live *in them.* They shall plant vineyards but not drink wine from them.[[424]](#footnote-424)

**The Day of Yahweh’s great fury has drawn near (1:14-2:3)**

The great day of Yahweh is near. It is near and hurries greatly. The noise on the day of Yahweh is bitter: the warrior cries out during it. That day is a day of rage, a day of anxiety and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and *more* darkness, a day of clouds and gloominess, a day *to blow* the trumpet and a day *to sound* the alarm against the impregnable cities and the corner-towers. And I will bring distress upon mankind and they shall walk like the blind *do*, for they have sinned against Yahweh and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of Yahweh’s rage. In the fire of His jealousy the entire earth will be consumed, for He shall make an end—O how terrifying it will be!—of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Gather yourselves together and assemble, O shameless nation.[[425]](#footnote-425) Before the decree takes effect—*before* the day[[426]](#footnote-426) sweeps past like chaff—before the fierce anger of Yahweh comes down upon you, before the day of Yahweh’s anger comes down upon you. Let all the meek of the land, those who work justice, seek Yahweh. Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you shall be kept safe[[427]](#footnote-427) in the day of Yahweh’s anger.

**The fate of the nations in the Day of Yahweh’s great fury (2:4-15)**

For Gaza shall be abandoned, Ashkelon *shall become* a desolation. As for Ashdod, she shall be banished[[428]](#footnote-428) by mid-day.[[429]](#footnote-429) Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the coastal region, the nation of Cherethites.[[430]](#footnote-430) The word of Yahweh is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines. I shall exterminate you until *you* *have* no inhabitant. And the coastal region shall become pastures, shelters[[431]](#footnote-431) for shepherds, and enclosures for flocks. And *the* region shall belong to the remnant of the house of Judah, and they shall grazethere. They shall lie down at evening in the houses of Ashkelon. For Yahweh their God looks after them and has restored their fortunes.[[432]](#footnote-432)

I have heard of the disgrace of Moab and the reviling of the children of Ammon who taunted My people and boasted about their borders. Therefore as I live (*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel) Moab shall surely be like Sodom and the children of Ammon like Gomorrah—overgrown with weeds, a salt-pit, a desolation forever. The remnant of My people shall plunder them and the remnant of My nation shall possess them. This *[punishment]* they shall have instead of their *current* loftiness since they disgraced and boasted against the people of Yahweh of hosts. Yahweh shall be feared by them when He makes to appear as nothing[[433]](#footnote-433) all the gods of the earth. They will worship Him, each from his place *in* all the islands of the nations.

You also, O Cushites, *will be* slain by My sword.

He shall stretch out His hand to the north, and He shall destroy Assyria. He shall make Nineveh a desolation, like a desert in its dryness. Flocks shall lie down in the midst of her *and* all the animals of the nations. Both the desert-owl and the screech-owl[[434]](#footnote-434) shall spend the night in her capitals. *Their* voice will resound through the windows. Devastation is at the threshold, for the cedar work is laid bare. This is the haughty city, the one who lived securely, saying in her heart, “I *am* and no one else.” What a desolation she has become, a lair for wild animals! All who pass by her shall hiss *and* wigwag with his hand.

**Woe against Jerusalem (3:1-8)**

Woe to her who is rebellious and impure, the city of oppressors! She has not obeyed *His* voice; she has not received instruction. She has not trusted in Yahweh. She has not drawn near to her God. Her officials in her midst are roaring lions. Her judges are evening wolves—by morning they have no bones left to gnaw. Her prophets are insolent,[[435]](#footnote-435) treacherous men. Her priests have profaned[[436]](#footnote-436) the holy. They do violence to the Law. Yahweh in her midst is righteous. He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails. However, the evildoer knows no shame.

I have cut off nations. Their corner-towers are deserted. I have laid waste their streets until *there are* no passersby. Their cities are devastated, without a man, without an inhabitant.[[437]](#footnote-437) I said, “Surely you will fear Me *and* receive instruction.” Then her habitation would not be cut down *nor* all which I have appointed against her. Nevertheless, they eagerly corrupted all their deeds.

Therefore, wait for Me—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—for the day when I arise for prey. For *it is* My decision to gather the nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them My fury, all the fierceness of My anger. For all the earth shall be consumed by the fire of My jealousy.

**Transformation follows fury (3:9-13)**

Surely then I shall give[[438]](#footnote-438) to the peoples pure speech[[439]](#footnote-439) so that all of them may call upon the name of Yahweh *and* serve Him shoulder to shoulder. From beyond the rivers of Cush, My worshipers,[[440]](#footnote-440) My dispersed ones, will bring My offering. In that day, you will no longer be ashamed of all your deeds whereby you have rebelled against Me. For then I shall remove from your midst your arrogant gloaters, and you shall never again exalt yourself in My holy mountain. I shall leave behind in your midst a meek and humble[[441]](#footnote-441) people, and they shall take refuge in the name of Yahweh. The remnant of Israel shall no longer act unjustly or speak lies, and a deceitful tongue shall not be found in their mouths. Instead they shall graze and lie down and nothing shall terrify *them.*[[442]](#footnote-442)

**Jerusalem’s future joy, deliverance, and fame (3:14-20)**

Yell for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! Yahweh has removed *His* sentences[[443]](#footnote-443) against you. He has turned aside your enemies. Yahweh, the King of Israel, is in your midst. You will fear evil no longer. In that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem, “Do not fear. O Zion, do not let your hands droop.” A Warrior *who* will deliver *is* Yahweh, your God, in your midst. He shall rejoice over you with singing. He shall silence *you* with His love. He shall loudly exult over you with rejoicing. I shall regather those from you[[444]](#footnote-444) who mourn *the loss* of the times of festival, *for whom* *the destruction* lifted up against her *[Jerusalem]* was a reproach.[[445]](#footnote-445) Behold, I will deal with all your oppressors at that time, and I shall deliver the lame and gather the outcast. I shall turn their shame into glory and fame[[446]](#footnote-446) in all the earth. At that time I shall bring you and at *that* time I shall gather you. For I shall give you fame and glory among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says Yahweh.

**The Book of Haggai**

**Introduction (1:1)**

In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month in the first day of the month, the word of Yahweh came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,[[447]](#footnote-447)

**Time to rebuild God’s house (1:2-11)**

Thus Yahweh of hosts spoke: “These people have said,[[448]](#footnote-448) ‘The time has not come, the time for the House of Yahweh to be built.’” And the word of Yahweh came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it time for you, even for you, to dwell in your paneled[[449]](#footnote-449) houses while this House *lies* desolate?” Therefore now, thus says Yahweh of hosts, “Take your ways to heart.[[450]](#footnote-450) You have sown much, but brought in little; eaten, but without *enough* for satisfaction; drunk, but without *enough* to become drunk; put on clothes, but no one is warm *enough*; and the one who hires himself out to earn wages, earns wages *to put it* into a pouch full of holes.” Thus says Yahweh of hosts, “Take your ways to heart. Go up to the mountains[[451]](#footnote-451) and bring wood and build this House; I will take pleasure in it, and I will be honored. Yahweh has promised *it*.

You envisaged much but, behold, it *amounted* to only a little. Then you brought *it* home, and I blew it away. Why? *This is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts[[452]](#footnote-452)—because of My house, which lies desolate while each of you busies[[453]](#footnote-453) *himself* with his own house. Therefore, *it is* on account of you *that* the heavens have withheld the dew and the land has withheld its produce. Moreover, I called for a drought upon the land, the mountains, the grain, the new wine, the oil, and that which comes from the ground, upon man and beast, and upon all the labor of the hands.”

**The people respond and build (1:12-15)**

Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all the remnant of the people obeyed the voice of Yahweh and the words of the prophet Haggai, according as Yahweh their God had sent him, and the people feared before Yahweh.[[454]](#footnote-454) And Haggai, Yahweh’s messenger, spoke Yahweh’s message to the people: “I am with you—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh.” And Yahweh stirred into action the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people.[[455]](#footnote-455) And they came and *began* work on the house of Yahweh of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

**The greater glory of the latter Temple (2:1-9)**

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of Yahweh came through the prophet Haggai: “Say now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people: ‘Who among you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not *seem* like nothing in your eyes?[[456]](#footnote-456) But now, be strong, O Zerubbabel—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—and be strong, Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and be strong, all the people of the land—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—and work! For I am with you—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts[[457]](#footnote-457)—the very thing I covenanted[[458]](#footnote-458) with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst; do not fear.’”

For thus says Yahweh of hosts, in just a little while I will once more[[459]](#footnote-459) shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all the nations and the desirables[[460]](#footnote-460) of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house *with* glory, says Yahweh of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than its previous *glory,* says Yahweh of hosts, and in this place I will provide peace—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts.

**Well-meaning works vitiated by disobedience (2:10-19)**

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Haggai: “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, ask now the priests *concerning* the law:[[461]](#footnote-461) ‘If a man carries holy flesh in a fold of his garment and he touches with this fold some bread, something boiled, some wine, some olive oil, or any *other* foodstuff, does it become holy?’ And the priests answered and said, ‘no.’” Then Haggai said, if someone unclean from contact with a corpse touches any of these, does it become unclean? The priests answered and said, “It will become unclean.” Then Haggai answered and said, *Even* so is this people and so is this nation before Me—this is *the verdict of Yahweh*—and so is all the work of their hands. Therefore, that which they are offering Me there is unclean.

But now, do[[462]](#footnote-462) take your ways to heart. *Take to heart* the time before stone was placed upon stone in the Temple of Yahweh, when *things* were *such that* *one* drew near to a heap of twenty, and it was only ten; *when one* drew near to the wine-vat to scoop out fifty measures and it was only twenty; *when* I struck you with scorching wind and mildew and hail, *even* all the work of your hands, but *still* none of you *turned* to Me—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh.

*But now,* dotake your ways to heart, from this day on, from the twentieth-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day when the foundation of the Temple of Yahweh was laid. Take your ways to heart. Is *not your* seed still in the barn? And until *now* the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not produced *anything*. *But* from this day *on,* I will bless *you*.

**Zerubbabel as a type of Messiah (2:20-23)**

Then the word of Yahweh came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month: “Say to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah: ‘I am *about to* shake the heavens and the earth, and I shall overthrow the throne of kingdoms and destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. And I shall overthrow chariots and their riders, and horses and their riders will go down, each by the sword of his brother.’ In that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts—I shall take you, O Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, my servant—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—and I shall make you like a signet *ring[[463]](#footnote-463)* for I have chosen you—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts.”

**The Book of Zechariah**

**Introductory call to repentance (1:1-6)**

In the eighth month in the second year of Darius, the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, Yahweh was very angry with your fathers. Then you shall say to them, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, Return to Me (*this is* the verdict of Yahweh), and I shall return to you, says Yahweh of hosts. Do not be like your fathers to whom the former prophets called, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, Return now from your evil ways and your evil doings but they neither listened nor paid careful attention to Me. (*This is* the verdict of Yahweh.)

As for your fathers, where are they? And as for the prophets, do they live forever? But My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not catch up with your fathers? So they[[464]](#footnote-464) repented and said, “Exactly as Yahweh of hosts resolved to do to us, according to our ways and according to our doings, even so has He dealt with us.”

**Vision 1: Messianic intercession leads to pronouncement of mercy (1:7-17)**

On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying, I saw last night[[465]](#footnote-465) and, behold, a man riding upon a red horse. He was standing among myrtle trees in a deep hollow, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. Then I said, What are these, my lord? And the angel speaking with me said to me, I myself will show you what these are.

And the man standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, These are those that Yahweh has sent out to patrol the earth. And they answered the Angel of Yahweh standing among the myrtle trees and they said, We have patrolled the earth and behold all the earth is still and quiet. And the Angel of Yahweh answered and said, O Yahweh of hosts, how long will You not show compassion upon Jerusalem and upon the cities of Judah toward which You have been angry for these seventy years?[[466]](#footnote-466) And Yahweh answered the angel speaking with me *with* welcome[[467]](#footnote-467) words—comforting words.

And the angel speaking with me said, Call out, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts. I am extremely jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am extremely angry at the nations who remain undisturbed—those who when I was *only* a little angered carried the punishment too far.[[468]](#footnote-468) Therefore, thus says Yahweh of hosts, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion: My House will be built in it (*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts) and a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem. Call out again, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, My cities shall once again overflow with good, and Yahweh shall again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.

**Vision 2: Payback for the enemies of God’s people (1:18-21)**

And I lifted up my eyes and saw and, behold, four horns. And I said to the angel speaking with me, What are these? And he said to me, These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen.[[469]](#footnote-469) And I said, What are these coming to do? And he said, saying, These are the horns that scattered Judah until a man could not lift up his head; now these are come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up *their* horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

**Vision 3: Jerusalem’s future immeasurably glorious (2:1-13)**

And I lifted up my eyes and saw and, behold, a man and in his hand a measuring line.[[470]](#footnote-470) And I said, Where are you going? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem to see what its width is and what its length is.

And, behold, the angel speaking with me went out and a different angel[[471]](#footnote-471) went out to meet him and said to him, Run, speak to that young man[[472]](#footnote-472) there, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited *like* open, rural country because of the multitude of people and animals in her midst. And I myself shall be for her—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh— a wall of fire all around, and I shall become the glory within her.

Ho! Ho![[473]](#footnote-473) Flee from the land of the north—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven. (*This again is* the verdict of Yahweh.) Ho, Zion, Escape!—O dweller *in* the daughter of Babylon.[[474]](#footnote-474) For thus says Yahweh of hosts, In pursuit of *His* glory He has sent Me to the nations who plundered you. For the one touching you is touching the pupil of His eye. For, behold, I am about to brandish My hand against them, and they shall become booty for those who served them. Then you shall know that Yahweh of hosts has sent Me.

Shout and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For, behold, I am coming and will dwell in your midst—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh. And many nations shall attach themselves to Yahweh in that day and shall become My people. And I shall dwell in your midst and you will know that Yahweh of hosts has sent Me to you. And Yahweh will take possession of Judah, His inheritance in the holy land, and again choose Jerusalem.

Keep silence, all flesh, before Yahweh, for He has begun to stir[[475]](#footnote-475) from His holy habitation.

**Vision 4: Cleansing commanded by the Angel of Yahweh (3:1-10)**

Then he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the Angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And Yahweh said to Satan, May Yahweh rebuke you, O Satan! May Yahweh, who chooses Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is this not a brand rescued from the fire? Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments and stood before the Angel. And He[[476]](#footnote-476) answered and said to the ones standing before Him, saying, Remove the filthy garments from him. And He said to him, See, I have taken away from you your iniquity and will clothe you withfestival garments. And I said, Let them place a clean turban upon his head. So they placed a clean turban upon his head and clothed him with *festive* garments, and the Angel of Yahweh was standing by.[[477]](#footnote-477) And the Angel of Yahweh admonished Joshua, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, If you will walk in My ways and keep My charge—that is, *if* you will both execute justice *in* My house and protect My courts[[478]](#footnote-478)—then I will give you freedom of access among these standing *here.*[[479]](#footnote-479)

Hear now, Joshua the high priest, you and your companions seated[[480]](#footnote-480) before you, for they are men *designated to be a* sign. For, behold, I am about to bring My Servant, the *Davidic* Sprout.[[481]](#footnote-481) For behold, the stone which I have placed before Joshua—seven eyes are *fixed* upon *that* one stone. Behold I am engraving its inscription—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts—and I shall remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. In that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts—you[[482]](#footnote-482) will invite, each his neighbor, under *his* vine and under *his* fig tree.

**Vision 5: Success guaranteed through the help of God’s Spirit (4:1-14)**

And the angel speaking with me returned and awakened me as a man who is awakened from his sleep.[[483]](#footnote-483) And he said to me, What are you seeing? And I said, I see and, behold, a lampstand, all of it gold, and its bowl upon the top of it, and seven lamps on it, and each of the seven lamps that are on top of it has seven lips.[[484]](#footnote-484) And two olive trees beside it, one on the right side of its bowl and the other on the left of it. And I replied and said to the angel speaking with me, saying, What are these,[[485]](#footnote-485) my lord?

Then the angel speaking with me answered and said to me, You *really* do not know what these are? And I said, No, my lord. So he answered and said to me, saying, This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might and not by strength but rather by My Spirit, says Yahweh of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a plain. And he shall bring out the uppermost stone[[486]](#footnote-486) to the shouts of grace, grace to it.[[487]](#footnote-487) And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house and his hands will finish it in order that you may know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me to you. For who can despise the day of small things while these seven gaze with rejoicing[[488]](#footnote-488) upon the tin stone[[489]](#footnote-489) in the hand of Zerubbabel? (These are the eyes of Yahweh that peruse the whole earth.)

Then I responded and said to him, What are these two olive trees upon the right of the lampstand and upon its left? And I responded a second time and said to him, What are the two olive tree branches[[490]](#footnote-490) that empty out their golden *oil* through the two golden conduits?[[491]](#footnote-491) And he said to me, saying, Do you *really* not know what these are? And I said, No, my lord. And he said, these are the two *ministers* of fresh oil[[492]](#footnote-492) who stand before the Lord of all the earth.

**Vision 6: A divine curse upon thieves and perjurers (5:1-4)**

And I lifted up my eyes again and saw and, behold, a flying scroll. And he said to me, What are you seeing? And I said, I see a flying scroll, its length is twenty cubits and its width ten. And he said to me, This is the curse going out[[493]](#footnote-493) over the face of the whole earth because, according to what is *written* on one side of it, every thief remains unpunished,[[494]](#footnote-494) and according to what is *written* on the other side of it, every *false* swearer remains unpunished. I have sent it out[[495]](#footnote-495)—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts—and it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one swearing falsely in My name, and spend the night in the midst of his house and consume it, its timbers, and its stones.

**Vision 7: Anti-God system of evil headquartered in Shinar (5:5-11)**

Then the angel speaking with me went out and said to me, Lift up now your eyes and, behold, what this is *that is* going out. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the ephah-basket going out. And he said, This is their eye[[496]](#footnote-496) in all the earth. And, behold, a lead cover was lifted up and there was a woman sitting in the middle of the ephah-basket. And he said, This is wickedness. Then he thrust her back into the middle of the ephah-basket, and he thrust the lead weight back down on its opening. And I lifted up my eyes and saw and, behold, two women going out and the wind *was* in their wings and their wings *were* stork wings. And they lifted up the ephah-basket between earth and heaven. And I said to the angel speaking with me, Where are they taking the ephah-basket? And he said to me, To build it a house in the land of Shinar. When *its house* has been readied, then it shall be placed there upon its stand.

**Vision 8: Babylon falls before earth’s only true King (6:1-8)**

And I lifted up my eyes again and saw and, behold, four chariots going out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains made of bronze.[[497]](#footnote-497) With the first chariot were red horses and with the second black horses, with the third chariot white horses and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—*all were* strong.[[498]](#footnote-498) Then I answered and said to the angel speaking with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said to me, These are the four winds of heaven going out to present themselves before the Lord of all the earth. *Harnessed* to one such *chariot,* the black horses are going out to the land of the north; the white ones are going out after them, and the dappled are going out to the land of the south. Now *these* strong ones went out[[499]](#footnote-499) and sought to go to patrol the earth.[[500]](#footnote-500) And He said, Go, patrol the earth. And they patrolled[[501]](#footnote-501) the earth. Then He[[502]](#footnote-502) cried out to me and said to me, saying, Look! The ones going out to the land of the north have caused My Spirit to rest in the land of the north.

**Conclusion to visions: crown Him with many crowns (6:9-15)**

Now the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,[[503]](#footnote-503) Take[[504]](#footnote-504) from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah, and from Jedaiah, and go in that same day—even you—go to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah, who has come back from Babylon. Take silver and gold and make a crown[[505]](#footnote-505) and place it on the head of the high priest Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, and address him, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, saying, Behold, a man, whose name is Sprout. He will sprout up out of His place and build the Temple of Yahweh. Yes, He it is who will build the Temple of Yahweh. He it is who will *rightfully* assume *royal* majesty and sit and reign upon His throne. He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between the two of them. And the crown shall become a reminder in the Temple of Yahweh for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen, the son of Zephaniah. And ones from afar shall come and work[[506]](#footnote-506) on the Temple of Yahweh. Then you shall know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me to you. Indeed, *this* shall happen if you will diligently obey the voice of Yahweh, your God.

**How long should I continue fasting over Jerusalem’s destruction? (7:1-7)**

Now it happened in the fourth year of King Darius that the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth, in *the month* Chislev. (Now Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and his men[[507]](#footnote-507) to entreat the face of Yahweh, saying to the priests of the house of Yahweh of hosts and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month,[[508]](#footnote-508) abstaining as I have done these how many years?) Then the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying, Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying, When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and in the seventh[[509]](#footnote-509) *months* these seventy years was it really for Me that you observed the fast? And when—*even now during your festivals—*you eat and drink, are you not eating and drinking for yourselves? Were *these* not the *very* words that Yahweh proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and at ease and her cities surrounded her, *when* both the Negev and the Shephelah[[510]](#footnote-510) were inhabited?

**God wants a “fast” from wrongdoing (7:8-14)**

Then the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, saying, Render true decisions and show *both* loyal kindness and compassion, each to his fellow man. Do not oppress the widow and the orphan, the foreigner and the needy, and do not devise evil, each toward his fellow man, in your heart. But they[[511]](#footnote-511) refused to pay attention and presented *instead* a stubborn shoulder, and they dulled their ears againsthearing. And they steeled their heart *like* adiamond[[512]](#footnote-512) against hearing the Law and the words that Yahweh of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore, great anger came from Yahweh of hosts. So it was *that* just as He called and they did not listen, even thus they called and I did not listen, says Yahweh of hosts, in order that I might scatter them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known and the land might become desolate behind them, without anyone passing through or coming back. Indeed, they made the desirable land into a desolation.

**God has “returned” to Jerusalem: be strong and do right (8:1-17)**

And the word of Yahweh of hosts came, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, I am exceedingly jealous for Zion. Indeed, I am jealous for her with great wrath. Thus says Yahweh, I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the middle of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the Faithful City; and the mountain of Yahweh of hosts, the Holy Mountain. Thus says Yahweh of hosts, old men and old women shall again live in the public squares[[513]](#footnote-513) of Jerusalem and each *with* a staff in his hand because of *his* many days. And the public squares of the city shall be filled with boys and girls playing in its public squares.

Thus says Yahweh of hosts, Just because[[514]](#footnote-514) it is impossible in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days is it also impossible in My eyes? (*This is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts.) Thus says Yahweh of hosts, Behold I will rescue My people from the land of the east and from the land of the setting sun. And I shall bring them back, and they shall dwell in the middle of Jerusalem. And they shall become My people and I Myself shall become their God—in *mutual* faithfulness and righteousness.[[515]](#footnote-515)

Thus says Yahweh of hosts, Let your hands be strong, *you* who in these days are hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were *there* on the day when the foundation of the house of Yahweh of hosts was laid in order that the Temple might be built. For before those days *neither* man nor animal *received* any compensation, and *no one* going out or coming in had any peace from the enemy because I had set every man, each against his fellow. But I will not now *treat* the remnant of this people according to the former days—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts. For *even your seed will be a* seed ofpeace[[516]](#footnote-516): the vine shall give its fruit and the land shall give its produce. The heavens shall give their dew, and I shall cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. And it shall be *that* just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, thus I shall deliver you and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear. Strengthen your hands.

For thus says Yahweh of hosts, Just as I planned to bring disaster upon you, when your fathers provoked Me to anger, says Yahweh of hosts, and I did not relent; in the same way, I have now purposed[[517]](#footnote-517) to bring good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah in these days. Do not fear. These are the things that you should do: let each speak truthfully with his fellow; transact *business* in your gates with truthfulness and complete[[518]](#footnote-518) justice. And do not plan in your heart to do evil, each to his fellow, and do not love dishonest oaths, for all these are things I hate—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh.

**Fasts become festivals; worship of Yahweh becomes universal (8:18-23)**

And the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying, Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the fast of the fourth *month*[[519]](#footnote-519)and the fast of the fifth *month*, the fast of the seventh *month* and the fast of the tenth *month[[520]](#footnote-520)* shall become jubilation, rejoicing, and pleasant times of assembly for the house of Judah. Therefore, love that which is true and that which promotes peace.[[521]](#footnote-521) Thus says Yahweh of hosts, peoples shall still come and the inhabitants of many cities, and the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to *the inhabitants* of another *city,* saying, Come on! Let’s go entreat the face of Yahweh and seek Yahweh of hosts! I myself have determined to go![[522]](#footnote-522) Many peoples and great nations shall come to seek Yahweh of hosts at Jerusalem and to entreat the face of Yahweh. Thus says Yahweh of hosts, In those days ten men from every tongue of the nations shall lay hold of—yes, lay hold of—the skirt of every Jew, saying, Let us go with you for we have heard *that* God *is* with you.

**God is protecting His house from all invaders (9:1-8)**

*The following is a* divine pronouncement: The word of Yahweh against the land of Hadrach, and *against* Damascus, its resting place (for Yahweh’s eye is upon mankind and *upon* all the tribes of Israel);[[523]](#footnote-523) and *against* Hamath also, *which* borders it; *against* Tyre and Sidon, although they *view themselves as* very shrewd. Indeed, Tyre has built fortifications for herself and has heaped up silver like dust and gold like the mud of the streets.

Behold, Adonai will dispossess her and strike her wealth into the sea, and she shall be consumed with fire. Ashkelon shall see *it* and shall fear. Gaza also and shall tremble greatly, Ekron also when its hope comes to ruin. Kingship shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall have no inhabitant. A mongrel race of people shall dwell in Ashdod, and I shall cut down the loftiness of the Philistines. And I shall remove its blood from its mouth and its abominable things from between its teeth, and they who remain—even they—*shall be* our God’s and shall be like a tribe in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite. But I shall camp before My house[[524]](#footnote-524) *as* a guard against any one passing through or coming back. In fact, no oppressor shall pass through against them again, for I have now *decided to* watch *it* with My eyes.

**Jerusalem’s King arrives (9:9-17)**

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your King shall come to you, righteous[[525]](#footnote-525) and victorious,[[526]](#footnote-526) meek and riding upon a donkey, even upon a male-colt, the offspring of a she-donkey. And I shall cut off chariotry from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The bow of battle shall be cut of, and He shall command the nations *to be at* peace. And His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River unto the ends of the earth.

And as for you,[[527]](#footnote-527) because of the blood of your covenant, I have dismissed your prisoners from the waterless pit.[[528]](#footnote-528) Return to the stronghold, O prisoners of hope.[[529]](#footnote-529) *I* declare to you—even today—I will restore to you double.[[530]](#footnote-530) For I have bent Judah, My bow, and filled *it* with Ephraim. I will set into action your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and I shall make you like a warrior’s sword. And Yahweh shall appear over them and His arrow shall go forth like lightning. And Adonai Yahweh shall sound the ram’s horn and go out in the storms of the south. Yahweh of hosts shall hedge them about. They shall eat and subdue sling stones. They will drink *and then* roar like *those drunk with* wine.[[531]](#footnote-531) They shall be full like the basins at the corners of the altar. And Yahweh their God shall deliver them in that day as the flock of His people for *they are* crown jewels exhibited on display in His land. For how great their comeliness and how great their beauty![[532]](#footnote-532) Grain shall cause the young men to flourish and fresh grape extract the young virgins.

**What Yahweh will do for His people as their shepherd (10:1-12)**

Ask rain in the time of spring rain from Yahweh—the Yahweh who produces storm clouds. And He will send them heavy showers, *even* vegetation for each man’s field. For the household gods[[533]](#footnote-533) speak *only* nonsense,[[534]](#footnote-534) and those who practice divination see *only* a lie and tell worthless dreams. They give empty comfort. Therefore, they wander like a flock. They are suffering[[535]](#footnote-535) because they haveno shepherd.

My anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I shall call the he-goats to account, for Yahweh of hosts shall take care of[[536]](#footnote-536) His flock, the house of Judah, and shall make them like His majestic horse in battle. From him will come the leader,[[537]](#footnote-537) from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every single[[538]](#footnote-538) ruler. And they shall be as mighty men trampling *the enemy* in the mud of the streets during battle. They shall fight for Yahweh is with them; even those riding horses shall be put to shame.

And I shall strengthen the house of Judah and deliver the house of Joseph, and I shall bring them back, for I have compassion upon them. And they shall be as though I never rejected them. For I am Yahweh their God and I will answer them. And Ephraim shall be like a warrior and their heart shall rejoice like wine. Their children shall see and rejoice. Their heart shall exult in Yahweh.

I will whistle for them and gather them together for I have redeemed them. And they shall be as numerous as they were before. And I shall sow them among the peoples, and in faraway places they shall remember Me. They, along with their children, shall revive and return. And I shall bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria, and I will lead them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon and *even* it shall not be enough for them. They[[539]](#footnote-539) shall cross over when the sea is turbulent. They shall smite the waves of the sea and all the depths of the river shall dry up. The loftiness of Assyria shall be brought down and the staff of Egypt shall disappear. And I shall strengthen them in Yahweh, and in His name they will go about—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh.

**Israel’s rejection of Yahweh, their shepherd, pictured (11:1-14)**

Open up your doors, O Lebanon, that a fire may consume your cedars. Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen; magnificent *trees* have been devastated. Wail, O oaks[[540]](#footnote-540) of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down. The sound of the shepherds’ wailing! For their splendor has been devastated. The sound of the roar of the lions! For the glory[[541]](#footnote-541) of the Jordan has been devastated.

Yahweh, my God, commanded *me* thus: Shepherd the flock *doomed* to beslaughtered, whose owners slaughter them and remain unpunished, and whose sellers say, “May Yahweh be blessed that I have become rich.” Their shepherds do not show any compassion upon them. For I shall not again show compassion upon the inhabitants of the land—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh. And, behold, I will cause mankind to fall, each at the hand of his fellow and by the hand of his king. They shall crush the land, and I will not deliver from their hand.

So I shepherded the flock *doomed* to be slaughtered, in particular[[542]](#footnote-542) the afflicted[[543]](#footnote-543) of the flock. And I took to myself two staffs. I called the one “Kindness,”[[544]](#footnote-544) and I called the other “Union.” Thus, I shepherded the flock. And I got rid of three shepherds in one month. My soul grew impatient with them, and their souls, on the other hand, disdained me. And I said, I will shepherd you no *longer.* Let the one dying die, and let the one being destroyed be destroyed. And let those that remain each consume the flesh of his fellow. And I took my staff, “Kindness,” and broke it in pieces to put an end to my covenant that I had covenanted with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day, and the afflicted of the flock watching me knew thus that it was the word of Yahweh. And I said to them, If it seems good in your eyes, give *me* my wage; and if not, refrain. And they weighed out for my wage thirty shekels. And Yahweh said to me, throw it—*that* noble price with which I was valued by them—to the potter. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and I threw it to the potter *in* the house of Yahweh. And I broke my second staff, “Union,” putting an end to the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

**Israel punished with a worthless shepherd (11:15-17)**

And Yahweh said to me, take again to yourself the gear of a shepherd—*this time* of a worthless one. For, behold, I will raise up a shepherd in the land *who* will not take care of the perishing, he will not seek after *the welfare of* the young, and he will not heal the torn. He shall not sustain the one still healthy. Instead, he shall eat the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hooves. Woe to My worthless shepherd who neglects the flock! A sword upon his arm and his right eye! His arm shall waste away completely, and his right eye shall be completely blinded.

**The day the nations who attack Jerusalem are destroyed (12:1-9)**

*The following is* adivine pronouncement: the word of Yahweh concerning Israel—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh, the one who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him—Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup that causes staggering to all the peoples all around. (The siege *that is* against Jerusalem shall also be against Judah.) And it shall be in that day *that* I shall make Jerusalem a heavy stone to all the nations—all the ones who lift it shall severely injure themselves. Nevertheless, all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

In that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—I will smite every horse with confusion and its rider with madness. I will open My eyes on behalf of the house of Judah, but I shall strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans[[545]](#footnote-545) of Judah shall say in their heart, “Through Yahweh of hosts, their God, the inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength.” In that day, I shall make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot[[546]](#footnote-546) among pieces of wood and like a fiery torch among newly cut grain, and they shall consume upon the right and upon the left all the peoples all around. And Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in its place at Jerusalem. And Yahweh shall rescue the tents of Judah first in order that neither the honor of the house of David nor the honor of the inhabitant of Jerusalem will surpass *that of* Judah. In that day Yahweh shall protect the inhabitant of Jerusalem. And it shall be in that day that the one who stumbles among them *shall be* like David, the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of Yahweh in their presence.[[547]](#footnote-547) And it shall be in that day *that* I will set out to destroy all the nations coming up against Jerusalem.

**The day Jerusalem beholds her Messiah (12:10-13:1)**

And I shall pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitant of Jerusalem a spirit[[548]](#footnote-548) of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn over Him as the mourning over an only child and weep bitterly over Him as the bitter weeping over a firstborn.[[549]](#footnote-549) In that day, the mourning in Jerusalem shall be great like the mourning at Hadad-Rimmon[[550]](#footnote-550) in the valley of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, each clan by itself[[551]](#footnote-551)—the clan of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves, the clan of the house of Nathan[[552]](#footnote-552) by itself and their wives by themselves, the clan of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves, the clan of the Shimeites[[553]](#footnote-553) by itself and their wives by themselves. All the clans that remain, each clan by itself and their wives by themselves. In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for impurity.

**The day false prophets hide (13:2-6)**

And it shall be in that day—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts—that I will eliminate the names of idols from the land and they shall not be mentioned again. And I shall also banish from the land the *false* prophets and the spirit of uncleanness. And it shall be if a man prophesy *falsely* again, then his own father and mother who bore him shall say to him, “You shall not live for you have spoken a lie in the name of Yahweh.” And while he is in the *very* act of prophesying, his own father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through. And it shall be in that day *that* the *false* prophets shall be ashamed, each at the vision he *sees* as he is in the act of prophesying, and they shall no *longer* wear a garment of hair[[554]](#footnote-554) in order to deceive. And he will say, “I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the soil for since my youth a man has hired[[555]](#footnote-555) me out *as his farmhand*.” And *one* will say to him, “What *then* are these wounds in between your hands?”[[556]](#footnote-556) And he will say, “I was wounded at my friends’ house.”

**The day God’s shepherd is smitten (13:7-9)**

 Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man, My fellow—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh of hosts. Smite the shepherd that the flock might be scattered. And I will turn My hand against[[557]](#footnote-557) the vulnerable[[558]](#footnote-558) ones. And it shall be in all the land—*this is* the verdict of Yahweh—two parts shall be cut off in it *and* shall perish, while *only* a third shall remain in it. And I shall bring the third part through the fire and I shall refine them like *one* refines silver, and I shall test them like *one* tests gold. *This surviving third* shall call upon My name and I will answer him. I will say, He is My people. And he will say, “Yahweh is my God.”

**The day Yahweh reigns in Jerusalem and becomes earth’s King (14:1-21)**

Behold the day of Yahweh is coming when the spoil taken from you shall be divided in your midst. For I shall gather all nations to Jerusalem for battle. The city shall be captured, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half of the city shall go into exile but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then Yahweh shall go forth and fight against those nations like on *past* occasions *when* He fought during a time of battle.[[559]](#footnote-559) And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which faces Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in half from east to west *forming* a very great valley. Half of the mountain shall retract toward the north, and its *other* half toward the south. And you[[560]](#footnote-560) shall flee *into* the valley of the mountains I *will have just made,* for the valley of the mountains shall extend as far as Azal.[[561]](#footnote-561) And you shall flee as you fled from the presence of the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Then Yahweh, my God, shall come *and* all the holy ones with You.

And it shall be in that day there shall be no light[[562]](#footnote-562); the splendid *heavenly bodies[[563]](#footnote-563)* will congeal. Rather, it shall be a unique day—known *only* by Yahweh[[564]](#footnote-564)—with neither day nor night. So it shall happen *that* at evening time it shall *still* be light.

And it shall be in that day *that* fresh water shall go out from Jerusalem, half of it toward the eastern sea and half of it toward the western sea.[[565]](#footnote-565) It shall *flow* in both summer and winter.

And Yahweh shall become king over all the earth. In that day, Yahweh shall be one and His name one.

All the land from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem shall be transformed into a kind of plateau.[[566]](#footnote-566) And *Jerusalem* shall rise up high and be inhabited in its place from the Benjamin Gate until the place of the former gate, *even* until the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananel until the king’s winepresses. And *people* shall dwell in it, and there shall not *again* be a decree of destruction *against it*. Instead Jerusalem shall dwell securely.

And this shall be the plague with which Yahweh shall plague all the peoples who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongue shall rot in their mouth. And it shall be in that day that a great panic from Yahweh shall be upon them, and each shall lay hold of the hand of his fellow and raise his hand against the hand of his fellow. (Judah also will fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered up—gold and silver and clothing in great abundance.) And just like this plague shall be the plague upon the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and every *other* animal that is in those camps.

And it shall be *that* every survivor of all the nations that attacked Jerusalem shall go up yearly to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to celebrate the Festival of Booths. And it shall be *that* no rain shall fall upon *any* from the clans of the earth who do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts.[[567]](#footnote-567) And if the clan of Egypt shall not go up or come, no *rain* shall be upon them *but rather* the plague with which Yahweh afflicts the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Booths. (This shall be the punishment upon Egypt, and the punishment upon all the nations who will not go up to celebrate the Festival of Booths.)

In that day “Holiness to Yahweh” shall be *inscribed* upon all the horse bells, and the cooking pots in the house of Yahweh shall be like the basins before the altar. And it shall be *that* every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah *shall be* “Holiness to Yahweh of hosts,” and everyone sacrificing shall come and shall procure *some* of them and shall cook in them. And there shall not *again* be a Canaanite[[568]](#footnote-568) in the house of Yahweh of hosts in that day.

**The Book of Malachi**

**Introduction (1:1)**

*This is* a divine pronouncement,[[569]](#footnote-569) the word of Yahweh to Israel through Malachi.

**God asserts His love for Israel (1:2-5)**

I have loved you, says Yahweh, but you say, “How have you loved us?”[[570]](#footnote-570) Is not Esau Jacob’s brother? (*This is* the verdict of Yahweh.) Yet I *set my* love on Jacob,[[571]](#footnote-571) but *chose to* hate Esau and made his mountain a desolation and his inheritance a deserted *haunt* for jackals.[[572]](#footnote-572) If Edom should say, “We have been shattered but we shall return and rebuild *our* place of ruins,” thus says Yahweh of hosts, “They themselves shall rebuild but I myself shall demolish *it again*. And they shall call themselves, ‘territory of the guilty’ and ‘the people against whom Yahweh shows indignation[[573]](#footnote-573) perpetually.’ ”[[574]](#footnote-574) Your eyes will see it and you yourselves will say, “Yahweh manifests His greatness[[575]](#footnote-575) even beyond the territory of Israel.”[[576]](#footnote-576)

**Disservice to the great King (1:6-2:9)**

A son will show honor to his father and a slave to his master. If I also am a father, where is my glory? And if I am a master where is *appropriate* reverence for Me? Yahweh of hosts says *this* to you, O priests, who are despising My name. But you say, “In what way have we despised Your name?” *By* offering defiled[[577]](#footnote-577) food upon My altar. But you say, “In what way have we defiled you?” When you say, “The table[[578]](#footnote-578) of Yahweh can be treated as of little importance.” When you offer for sacrifice a blind *animal*, is that not evil? And when you offer a lame or sick one, is that not evil *too*? Try to[[579]](#footnote-579) bring such to your governor! Will he be pleased with you or show you favor? queries Yahweh of hosts.

So now, try to appease the face of *our* God that He might be gracious to us. Such *sacrificing as* has come from your hands—will He show you favor? queries Yahweh of hosts. Who yet *is there* among you that will close the doors in order that you not kindle a fire on My altar in vain? I take no pleasure in you, says Yahweh of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hands. For from the sun’s rising even until its setting, My name shall be great among the nations, and incense and a pure offering shall be offered to My name in every place,[[580]](#footnote-580) for My name will be great among the nations, says Yahweh of hosts. But you profane it when you say, “The table of Adonai can be treated in a defiling manner[[581]](#footnote-581) and as for its fruit, its food can be treated as of little importance.”

You say, “Behold, what a nuisance!” And you sniff at it *with disgust,* says Yahweh of hosts, and you bring what has been stolen or the lame or the sick. And you bring *it as your* offering. Shall I accept it from your hands? queries Yahweh. Rather, cursed is the deceiver who has a male in his flock and vows *it,* but *then* sacrifices what is blemished to Adonai; for I am a great King, says Yahweh of hosts, and My name will be feared among the nations.

So now, O priests, this *is* what I have commanded[[582]](#footnote-582) concerning you: Unless you listen to or take to heart *the issue of* giving glory to My name, says Yahweh of hosts, I will send a curse[[583]](#footnote-583) upon you and curse your blessings. In fact, I have *already* cursed them, because none of you is taking *the matter* to heart. Behold, I will rebuke[[584]](#footnote-584) your very own offspring. I will spread dung—the dung from your festival *sacrifices*—upon your faces, and you will be carried away with it.[[585]](#footnote-585) Then you shall know that this *is* what I have commanded concerning you so that my covenant with Levi might *continue to* exist,[[586]](#footnote-586) says Yahweh of hosts.

My covenant with him[[587]](#footnote-587) was life and peace, and I gave them to him; *my covenant requirement of him was* fear, and he feared me. He trembled before My name. True instruction was in his mouth, and injustice was not found in his lips. He walked with Me wholly[[588]](#footnote-588) and uprightly, and he turned many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should transmit[[589]](#footnote-589) knowledge, and *people* should seek the Law from his lips. For he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts.

But as for you, you turned aside from the way. You caused many to stumble at the Law. You ruined the covenant of Levi, says Yahweh of hosts. Therefore, I have caused you to be despised and demeaned before all the people, seeing that[[590]](#footnote-590) you do not keep My ways and you show partiality with regard to the Law.[[591]](#footnote-591)

**God decries marital unfaithfulness (2:10-16)**

Do not we all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why *then* are we dealing faithlessly, each with his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt faithlessly and an abominable thing has been perpetrated in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the holy *people[[592]](#footnote-592)* of Yahweh, whom He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. May Yahweh cut off from the tents of Jacob *every such* man, whether the one who awakes or the one who answers,[[593]](#footnote-593) who *then*[[594]](#footnote-594)brings a gift to Yahweh of hosts. This, secondly, you have done: covering the altar of Yahweh *with* tears, weeping, and groans because He no longer pays attention to *your* gift or receives *it* favorably from your hands.

But you say, “For what reason?”[[595]](#footnote-595) Because Yahweh has borne witness against you and against the wife of your youth toward whom you have dealt faithlessly, although she is your companion and the wife of your covenant.[[596]](#footnote-596) Did He[[597]](#footnote-597) not make *you[[598]](#footnote-598)* one[[599]](#footnote-599)—and *that oneness includes* both flesh[[600]](#footnote-600) *and* spirit?[[601]](#footnote-601) And why the oneness? *He perpetually* seeks[[602]](#footnote-602) a godly offspring![[603]](#footnote-603) Therefore, you should be on guard in your spirit and not deal faithlessly toward the wife of your youth. [[604]](#footnote-604) For *I* hate sending away,[[605]](#footnote-605) says Yahweh, Israel’s God. Violence[[606]](#footnote-606) will stain the clothing of him *who does so,* says Yahweh of hosts.[[607]](#footnote-607) Therefore, you should be on guard in your spirit and not deal faithlessly.

**God’s ways criticized (2:17-3:5)**

You have wearied Yahweh with your words, but you say, “How have we wearied *Him*?” When you say, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of Yahweh and He delights in them” or “Where is the God of justice?”

Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord whom you are seeking, even the Messenger of the covenant in whom you find pleasure, shall come suddenly to His Temple. Behold, He shall come, says Yahweh of hosts. But who can withstand the day of His coming and who can remain standing when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’[[608]](#footnote-608) soap. And he shall sit *as* a refiner and a purifier of silver and purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silverin order that they may offer an offering to Yahweh in the approved manner.[[609]](#footnote-609) Then the gift of Judah and of Jerusalem will be pleasing to Yahweh as in former days and in previous years.

And I shall draw near to you for judgment, and I shall bear quick testimony against those who practice sorcery, the ones committing adultery, and the ones swearing falsely; against the ones withholding the wage of the hired worker, the widow, and the orphan; and *against* those who deprive the sojourner *of his rightful due* and do not fear Me, says Yahweh of hosts.

**On robbing God and its consequences (3:6-12)**

*It is only* because I Yahweh do not change that you sons of Jacob do not perish. Since the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept *them.* Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Yahweh of hosts. But you say, “In what way do we *need to* return?”[[610]](#footnote-610)

Will a man rob God? Of a surety, you are robbing Me! But you say, “How have we robbed You?” *In the matter of* tithes and contributions! You are being cursed with a curse, *even* this entire nation, because you are robbing Me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse[[611]](#footnote-611) that there might be food in My house, and put Me now to the test in this matter, says Yahweh of hosts, if I shall not open to you the windows of the heavens and pour out upon you a blessing beyond what *you* need. And I will rebuke for you the devourer so that it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says Yahweh of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed for you yourselves shall become the delight of the earth, says Yahweh of hosts.

**Faithfulness to the Lord disparaged (3:13-4:3)**

Your words against Me are severe, says Yahweh of hosts, but you say, “What have we spoken together against You?” You have said, “It is vain to serve God,” and “What will be *our* return[[612]](#footnote-612) if we keep His charge and walk mournfully before Yahweh of hosts?[[613]](#footnote-613) So from now on, we will consider the arrogant[[614]](#footnote-614) to be blessed: workers of iniquity not only prosper; they also put God to the test and escape.”[[615]](#footnote-615)

Then the reverent toward Yahweh spoke together, each with his neighbor. Yahweh paid careful attention[[616]](#footnote-616) and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before Him on behalf of the ones who reverence Yahweh and highly esteem His name. In the day when I act,[[617]](#footnote-617) they shall be My treasured possession,[[618]](#footnote-618) says Yahweh of hosts, and I will spare them as a man spares the son who serves him.[[619]](#footnote-619) You shall then see once more the difference between the righteous and the wicked, and between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him.

For behold the day shall come, burning like an oven, and all the arrogant and every doer of wickedness will be stubble, and the coming day shall burn them up, says Yahweh of hosts, leaving them neither root nor branch. But for you who reverence My name the sun of righteousness[[620]](#footnote-620) shall shine forth *with* healing in its rays,[[621]](#footnote-621) and you shall go out and frolic like well-fed calves. And you shall crush the wicked underfoot, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day when I do *it*, says Yahweh of hosts.

**Conclusion (4:4-6)**

Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, the statutes and judgments that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and fearful day of Yahweh comes. And he shall turn[[622]](#footnote-622) the heart of fathers toward *their* sons and the heart of sons toward their fathers[[623]](#footnote-623) lest I come and strike the earth *with* destruction.[[624]](#footnote-624)

1. Literally *was*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jeroboam II, who reigned in the 8th century BC, not the Jeroboam who was the first king of the Northern Kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Lit., a wife of fornication and children of fornication. My translation reflects the proleptic view of Hosea’s marriage. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This phrase “to him” is missing from the account of the next two births, which makes some think that the next two children (“No Mercy” and “Not My People”) are not Hosea’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Jehu’s bloody rampage at Jezreel against the house of Ahab would eventually be punished by God. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Three considerations tip the scale in favor of this translation (instead of “that I should ever forgive them,” NASB): 1. Hosea 5:14 uses this same verb (*nasa*) to mean carry off (and, as here in 1:6, it does not have an explicit direct object), 2. The obvious parallelism between vv. 6-7 suggests that God will not save Israel militarily but will rather use the Assyrians to cart her into captivity, and 3. “but” is preferred over “that” as a rendering for *ki* in this context. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. As terrible as this judgment may sound, it fits exactly the nature of her “crime.” She who exposed her body shamelessly to illegitimate lovers will now be exposed in a way that is humiliating. God’s intention is to drive her to her senses and to see the idiocy of her sins. It is ironic how sinners throw themselves to their loves and lovers, while turning their backs on such great Love. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Literally, the gift one gives to a harlot. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Literally, to inspect and then give whatever citation is appropriate. In this case, God’s inspection of them can only result in His punishment of her. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The word Baal here is technically plural—the days in which she worshipped the various Baals. Baal was actually a generic word meaning master or lord. It could then be used to refer to one’s chief god as “The Master” or “The Lord.” The “Baal” of the Canaanite pantheon was their storm-god, and he is the one we normally think of as “Baal” in the pages of the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. We immediately think of earrings, but it could also refer to nose-rings. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is a literary device called allusion—referring back to a previous event that one’s readers are familiar with. In this case, Yahweh (through Hosea) is alluding to the place where Achan was burned, the Valley of Trouble. God can turn even a place of shameful judgment like that into a Door of Hope. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Think of the hearty singing and grateful submission to Yahweh when He delivered them from the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Exod. 15). God will woo Israel back to Himself until she similarly will joyfully and completely turn to Him again. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Literally, “my Baal.” The word Baal, in addition to referring to the prominent false god of the Canaanites, can also mean master or lord. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Again, remember that “Baal” can refer to any number of false gods. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Literally, to “cut” a covenant, since a full covenant ceremony involved cutting up animals in pieces and walking between them as a way of picturing the seriousness of the promises being made (see Genesis 15 for an example). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. “*Righteousness* describes Yahweh’s commitment to be all that his covenant role as Sovereign and Saviour demands and to relate to her in strength, loyalty and uprightness in all his dealings with her…. *Justice* centres in Yahweh’s fairness in all his relationships to his people, as he honours their obedience and corrects their waywardness, without whimsy or arbitrariness…. [*Loyal kindness*] rings with the tones of covenant loyalty, describing both the attitude and the behaviour of the Lord who made a pledge to his people in full freedom…. *Mercy* glows with tenderness and compassion, especially as it shows itself to the weak, the needy, the oppressed.” David A. Hubbard, [*Hosea: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/totc28hous;ref=Bible.Ho2.19-20;off=3440;ctx=:9,_12$3B_Mic._7:20)._~Mercy_glows_with_ten), vol. 24, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Recognizing the *waw* (“and”) as expressing result. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Literally, “Jezreel,” but I have translated its meaning as I have done with the names of the other children in the next verse. (“Jezreel” is a transliteration.) *Jezreel* can mean either Yahweh sows or Yahweh scatters (in a negative sense).Here, Yahweh is playing on the good meaning of the word. As He once again “listens” to the heavens need for rain and they drop their precious cargo upon the earth, the earth will respond by bringing forth a harvest of food. This will result in Jezreel—a people whom God Himself has planted in the land (as the next verse explains). To bring out the word-play one could possibly translate Jezreel as “God’s Planted One” or “Planted by God.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A reminder of how idolaters become attached to the strangest of things and refuse to be pulled away from them (much as Lot’s wife could not bear to leave her beloved Sodom). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The text does not specify whether it was fifteen shekels or fifteen silver pieces. Very possibly, fifteen silver pieces equaled fifteen shekels. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Possibly equaling almost 200 kilograms. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Such stone pillars were often erected at high places and were associated with the fertility rituals of Canaanite religion. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Hosea ministered toward the end of the Northern Kingdom and is thus predicting here the coming Assyrian Captivity. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *David, their king,* is a clear reference to the Messiah. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. How one translates verse 4 determines the interpretation of the passage through v. 10. My rendering above follows the MT. Those who emend the MT (without any versional support) to read “My contention is with you, O priest,” then take the verses that follow (vv. 5-10a) to refer to the priesthood. In my estimation, the MT does not need to be emended in order to make good sense. Israel’s audacity in opposing any correction given is on par with those who dare to argue a priest’s official verdict (Deut. 17:8-12). The opening verse (4:1) has already made clear that Yahweh’s “lawsuit” is for all the children of Israel, not just for the priests. But they, like the prophets (v. 4), are singled out for special mention along the way (v. 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. References to Israel’s refusal to acknowledge God bracket this subsection (vv. 1, 6) as do references to shame in the next (vv. 7, 18-19). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. This alludes back to Exodus 19:6, where Israel was to be a “kingdom of priests.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. That is, the punishment that falls on the people will fall also on the priest—his being a priest will not exempt him from the divine penalty. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The focus is on the punishment that will happen to the priest, although the same will be meted out to the people. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Inquire in the sense of consult for advice, i.e., to foresee the future or predict the outcome of an event. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The kind you would use when you travel by foot. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. I.e., the new brides of your sons. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Canaanite religion took place at shrines on high places where, as a part of religious worship, men and women serviced the worshippers with “sacred prostitution.” This licentious behavior was supposed to simulate (or stimulate) the dropping of rain and the bringing forth of crops. In this verse, the Lord is excoriating His people for copying these pagan activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Gilgal, as the place of Israel’s camp immediately after their entrance into Palestine, held great religious and historical significance to the nation and had become consequently a place of sacrificial ritual (see, e.g., 9:15; 12:11; Amos 4:4; 5:5). The command here in this verse to not enter Gilgal is God’s way of stating that whatever sacrifices they intend to offer there are pointless as He will not accept them. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Probably a word-play: *Bethel* (lit., “house of God”) has instead become *Beth-Aven* (“house of wickedness”). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. They had no right to take the name of God on their lips or use His name in their promises when He was so far from their heart and every-day conduct. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Many translations take the second half of the verse as a rhetorical question. In my opinion, it is best understood as a statement, especially in light of the next verse. To be left to pasture in an open field is akin to abandonment—let “fate” take its course… God is done with Israel! [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Only eight words in Hebrew, but the toughest verse to this point in Hosea. My translation follows the general consensus of translators (most particularly the NASB), but the rendering is quite uncertain at various points. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Most translations translate this *wind*. My reading of the text suggested a reference to a “wrong spirit.” Hubbard (TOTC, p. 120-121) agrees. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. In other words, these leaders have been the cause of destruction at these places. The thought continues in v. 2 (i.e., “slaughter”). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Literally, *have deeply slaughtered.* [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. They obviously know who Yahweh is, but they have not chosen to become acquainted with or foster a relationship with Him. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Arrogance in the sense of their refusal to humble themselves before Yahweh by thorough confession of sin and a turning to Him. You could almost translate this as “refusal to submit.” [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Picture a courtroom scene where various witnesses of the prosecution rise up to bear testimony against the accused. One of the witnesses that will bring accusation against Israel is her own pride. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Literally, *consume them*. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. God required of Israel offerings at the beginning of every month (new moon). However, their sinful departure from Him rendered Israel’s sacrifices pointless and ineffective. Rather than contributing to enjoying God’s favor and blessing, their religious festivals (such as the New Moon offerings) were instead contributing to their destruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Empty* translates a word that occurs in only three verses in the Old Testament. The two suggested translations for this disputed word either see it as related to the Hebrew word for “commandment” (here it would refer to human commandments) or to the word for that which is empty or meaningless (typically of idols). This is how the Septuagint understands the term, and I have opted for the same in my translation above. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Rot caused by worms, grubs, or moths. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Not real literal sickness, but his suffering or destruction due to divine judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. “Great” is taken by some as a proper name, Jareb. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The two or three days are not literal days but are the Hebrew way of expressing a short period of time. The point is that God would not delay long before healing them from the “wounds” received as divine chastisement. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *Acknowledge* and *know* actually translate the same Hebrew word. The verse is urging a pursuit of Yahweh for the pursuit of entering into a personal relationship with Him—not *know* in a mere intellectual sense, but relationally. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. The word here does not just refer to the dawn but to the greyness right before dawn. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Israel has very little rain and depends agriculturally on the early rains beginning in October and the late rains in March/April. Without the latter rain in particular, the crops will not survive the hot summer. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Literally, it reads “your judgments” (referring to Israel). I have rendered the “you” above as an objective genitive, i.e., as the object of the verbal action (God’s judgments *against Israel*). A slightly different way of dividing the Hebrew words (a difference supported by the Septuagint, Syriac Peshitta, and Aramaic Targum) actually would result in the translation “my judgments [against you] have gone forth like light.” [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. The reference to light suggests either (1) the inescapability of or (2) the repeatability of daylight (i.e., that God has consistently and repeatedly punished them). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *There* usually indicates a place, but occasionally in poetry it can be used to point to something with emphasis: “*Look how* they have dealt treacherously toward me.” [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The word is literally “uneven” or “bumpy” (see Isa. 40:4). A related word means heel or footprint. The imagery suggests that Gilead’s inhabitants are so corrupt and violent that they have left bloody tracks all over the town. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Literally, “a man.” [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Shechem was a place associated with Israel’s religious past. Abraham built an altar there (Gen. 12:7). Jacob bought property there, and Joseph’s bones were eventually laid to rest there (Gen. 33:19; Josh. 24:32). Rehoboam hoped to be crowned king there (1 Ki. 12:1). God is pointing out the irony of religious personnel journeying to a place of such historical and religious significance, purportedly for the purpose of performing some religious ritual, while they act in a way totally incongruous with their profession of godliness. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Israel and Ephraim are synonymous. The defilement is the consequence of infidelity. Just as marital infidelity brings uncleanness into the matrimonial bond, so Israel’s spiritual adultery has resulted in spiritual defilement in their relationship with God. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Literally, *remember*, not in the sense of “to recall to mind” but in the sense of “to actively think upon.” [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. In context, this is plausibly referring to “political adultery,” i.e., infidelity to their kings. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Their immoral desires are so inflamed that they do not die down! [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. The nature of the day is not clarified in the text. It could be a birthday celebration or some other special occasion. More likely, it is the day that celebrates the king’s inauguration, when his sub-rulers and advisors are already surreptitiously plotting his downfall. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. What fuels their anger is a spirit of assassination. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Israel’s political disintegration in its final years included multiple policy changes, where it looked to the various nations around them for protection. Playing nations against each other and abandoning sworn political commitments only hastened the nation’s demise. Not to mention the spiritual defilement brought on by these engagements with foreigners. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. A flat, round loaf of bread—similar to what we call a pita. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Scorched on one side and uncooked on the other, the bread is useless and unfit to eat. Negligence on the part of those responsible for the good of the nation has led to this unfortunate result. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Continuing the theme of v. 8a, that foreign influence has actually weakened the nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Like Samson who did not know that his strength had left him, so Israel does not realize how far gone she is as a nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. I.e., in spite of all the evidence of national disintegration. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. This last line could be translated as (1) as they have heard in their assembly or (2) over the report of their assembly. (Proposed emendations to the text produce multiple other possible translations.) If we continue the idea of God’s hunting down Israel for its pursuit of foreign help, then the last line probably conveys the idea that He will use their very diplomatic moves to ensnare them. The *report of their assembly* would refer either to the nation’s decisions to seek foreign, diplomatic help or to the reports given to the nation relating the consequence of a diplomatic mission. Either way, God will counter their efforts like a master chess-player thwarts the offensive thrusts of his opponent. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. More literally, “And they do not cry to Me from their heart when they wail upon their beds.” [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. That is, they want God’s help when they have exhausted all other possible avenues of assistance, but they do not really want Him. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Literally, “I have not known.” In other words, Israel has not “informed” God or sought His counsel. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. This, of course, was not their purpose in making the false gods. They thought the gods would deliver or prosper them; instead, they end up hurting them and leading to their extinction as a nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Foreigners, in other words, have gotten from her all they wanted and now she lies discarded—emptied of anything valuable or useful. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Just for the record, I was already contemplating this translation of the last phrase of v. 9 before I glanced at the NIV. Strikingly, God considers Assyria as an inappropriate lover when His people look to her resources and power for deliverance. God is jealous for the affection of His people, and expects them to look to Him for all of their concerns. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Literally, “now,” but the idea is not that God will do His mustering immediately but inevitably. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Hubbard, TOTC, *Hosea,* p. 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. The amount of italics in my translation hints at the challenge of the last five words (in Hebrew) of this verse. Another possible rendering: “they will soon begin *to suffer* because of the burden *of tribute needed to pay to* the king of princes (i.e., the king of Assyria). I have opted for the translation above in part because of the grammar and in part because it fits the known scenario of Menahem’s actions in 2 Kings 15:19-20. Either translation option yields the same essential fact: their hiring of foreign allies and making of alliances will not preserve them from God’s judgment but instead serves only to weaken the nation economically. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. It is possible that the Masoretes mis-pointed this word as a Qal instead of as a Piel. (It requires no changes in the actual consonants.) If so, then the verse would read as follows: “Although Ephraim multiplied altars for sin offerings, they have become *in actuality* altars for sinning” (cf. NIV; NLT; NET). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. In other words, Israel practiced pagan worship on its threshing floors. They viewed a bountiful harvest as a benefit accrued from the pagan gods they were looking to for agricultural prosperity. From God’s point of view, their actions were harlotry and the gifts they received on their threshing floors were, therefore, wages derived from prostitution. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Eating was a part of ancient sacrifice. The offerer was sometimes given a portion for himself and his family (e.g., the peace offering). Mourners could not partake of the sacrificial ritual of eating because they had touched a corpse and were therefore unclean. They were therefore ritually excluded from eating anything related to Temple sacrifice. In exile, Israel would be like mourners in that they would be unclean. Thus, the exile would include a spiritual dimension to the nation’s chastisement; the lack of a Temple would render impossible sacrifice to Yahweh and ritual purity. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Stuart (WBC), *Hosea-Jonah,* p. 139. Probably referring to the coming destruction at the hands of the Assyrians. Escape from the Assyrians will not mean escape from divine judgment. Not even Egypt would be a refuge for them. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. This verse continues the theme of the nation’s rejection of the prophetic office. Verse 7 records their disdain for God’s men; verse 8 suggests their active hostility toward them. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Both open similes suggest something unexpected but delightful, something that builds expectation for the future. Unfortunately, Israel did not live up to God’s “expectations.” [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Some have suggested that the word translated “Tyre” could instead be rendered as “palm tree.” [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. God always renders judgment appropriate to the crime. Israel looked to Baal and its related fertility cult to stimulate reproduction and agriculture. (In their day, many children was a sign of “divine blessing.”) God, fittingly, will strip Israel of both children and crops as a testimonial that from Him comes all reproductive or agricultural blessing. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. This is the second time in Hosea Gilgal is mentioned, and it will occur once more (4:15; 12:11). Probably due to its association with important events in Israel’s history (such as during the time of Joshua and King Saul), Israel had selected it as a key shrine location to practice its syncretistic (or perhaps outright pagan) worship. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. In Hebrew, words like “hate” and “love” need not carry the emotional overtones that their English counterparts do. The words here have a more volitional aspect—not so much the emotion of dislike (or affection) but the decision that results from the dislike, i.e., God *has rejected* Israel (because of His dislike of what is taking place at Gilgal) and He will not again *choose* to shower His affection upon them. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Technically singular but in the sense of a collective noun (the verb is plural). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Literally, “people,” but the idea is the people devoted to its worship. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. A simple imperfect can sometimes have a frequentative idea. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. The word *counsel* and the feminine form of the word *wood* are the same in Hebrew. In context, it seems here that the calf idol of Israel is being referred to here for what it really is—a glamorized piece of wood! This piece of wood could not save them from the hand of Assyria and thus the nation has been shamed. What they put their hope in has become a disgrace to them. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Probably an abbreviation for Beth-Aven, which is in term a derogatory nickname for Bethel. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. The Hebrew is not explicitly in the form of a question, but a question seems to work best grammatically. The reference is to the war against Gibeah in Judges 19-21, which nearly snuffed out the tribe of Benjamin. Those evildoers did not escape retribution; neither will the current evildoers in Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Literally, “when I desire.” In context, the idea is when the right time arrives for God to carry out His planned judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. What are Israel’s two sins? Hosea does not clearly identify them. Some are of the opinion (based on 3:5) that it refers to Israel’s rejection (1) of Yahweh and (2) of the house of David. Perhaps a better suggestion (based on the more immediate context) is Israel’s (1) idolatry and (2) pursuit of foreign alliances. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Literally, “to overpower,” in this context. The ESV renders this positively—God has spared (until now) Ephraim’s fair neck of the heavy work of plowing. The combined force of the conjunction (“but”) and the emphatic pronoun “I” (visible in Hebrew) suggest, however, a contrast to what has preceded. Another option is to re-point the verb as a Piel—“to cause to pass over,” i.e., God will now cause a yoke to pass over Ephraim’s fair neck. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Most battles in the ancient world began at dawn. This may suggest that the battle would be short—Israel’s defenses would not last long against the invader. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Literally, “they called to them.” The referent of “they” is unclear; that it was the prophets who called to them fits the tenor of other Scripture passages. Garrett (more creatively) takes it as Israel calling to Egypt, linking it to v. 1 (NAC, *Hosea,* pp. 222-223). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Literally, “with ropes of humanity.” Some instead relate *‘adam* (“humanity”) to the Arabic root “leather,” i.e., “leather ropes.” [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. God is again attacking their “military” counsels in which they sought after foreign alliances as the solution to their national problems. Diviners would have been included in any military-strategy meetings; their influence in decision-making in the ancient Near East is well known. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Admah and Zeboi(i)m were two cities overthrown at the same time as Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 29:23). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. That is, once He has judged Ephraim via the Assyrians, He will not again punish them but will instead shower His mercy upon them. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Some translations take this last part of the verse as a commendation of Judah (ESV; KJV; NKJV) but this seems at odds with v. 3. If I were to render “reckless” a little more loosely, I would do so this way: “Judah is fed up with her relationship to God and wants out.” See the other three uses of this verb in the OT (Gen. 27:40; Psa. 55:3; Jer. 2:31). It is used of people in circumstances of which they would like to break free. Here, Judah is in a relationship with Yahweh, at least in theory, but there are tell-tale strains in the relationship and if Judah could, they would gladly break free of the restraints that walking with Yahweh entails. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ephraim pursues things that cannot satisfy, like someone trying to find nourishment by consuming wind. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. The word refers to someone’s power—it can be someone’s wealth (cf. v. 9), capability to produce children, physical strength, etc. Here, because of its parallelism with “in the womb,” it refers to what Jacob did in his maturity or in his manhood. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Subject supplied from v. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. The Feast of Tabernacles specifically commanded the people to make “booths” and live in them for the duration of the feast. This was to commemorate how Israel lived in tents when they came out of Egypt (Lev. 23:42-43). [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. There is a play of words in vv. 13-14 that is not as visible in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. A translation supported by K&D, 10:100-101, that needs no emendation of the MT. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Referring to the land of Canaan that God graciously gave them. It met their every need but rather than further their loyalty to God, they proudly turned their backs on the Giver. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. “He” here has no clear referent but most likely alludes to Assyria, the agent of God’s judgment upon the Northern Kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Literally, “you said.” [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Literally, “has been bound up.” The imagery is that of legal evidence for a court case, written on a scroll and then sealed so that it cannot be tampered with. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. “Stored up” as testimony against him on the day of judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. This verse is unusual in that Israel is pictured both as a woman experiencing birth pains and as the fetus being born. The translation of the last part of the verse is a bit uncertain—it could mean that he “delays” to come out. Whether it is a matter of delay or proper presentation, the point is still clear: Israel lacks wisdom to know what is happening to him and how to respond correctly. Israel should be able to realize that judgment—pictured by the birth pangs in the verse—is about to fall upon him; however, he does not have the sense to react wisely. As a result, he will die—just like a child and mother in ancient times would when the birth process went awry. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. The first two clauses of v. 14 could be translated as declarative sentences (“I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol”). Admittedly, they do not contain any interrogative particle. However, the rare form of the interrogative “where” used in the middle two clauses of v. 14 (“*Where* are your plagues, O Death? *Where* is your sting, O Sheol?”) provides some logical basis for understanding the first two clauses as rhetorical questions. In addition, the context speaks strongly of coming divine judgment (vv. 12-13, 15-16). Admittedly, Hosea is the “prophet of reversals” (see, e.g., 11:8-9) and can transition swiftly from judgment to restoration and back. Nonetheless, the last phrase of v. 14 itself seems to further confirm God’s decree of judgment against His people will stand. He will not, however, completely destroy and abandon them, however, as 14:1ff is about to make clear. Of course, related to all this is Paul’s use of Hosea 13:14 in 1 Cor. 15:55 to speak of the triumph over death and Hell that the resurrection brings. Paul’s adaptation of Hosea 13:14 is in no way inappropriate. In using Hosea 13:14 he has deliberately lassoed one of the harshest sections of Hosea in order to show how the determined wrath of God against sin—even that!—will be swallowed up in victory through our resurrected Lord Jesus. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. *Where* here has the idea of “bring it on” (NET), as if God is speaking to (the literary device is called apostrophe) Death and Sheol to come and do their “dirty” work. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. “Relenting” may be a more accurate translation. This is the word root used of God’s not “relenting” or changing His mind about a decision He has made (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29). Here, then, God affirms that He will not deviate from His purpose to punish Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. The east wind is Assyria, which will sweep down on the Northern Kingdom and destroy it. Assyria acts as the agent of the Lord in bring destruction to His wayward people, thus she is designated here “the wind of Yahweh.” [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. I have added please as a way of showing that the verb form here is not strictly an imperative but rather a polite request. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. This translation comes from McComiskey, vol. 1, p. 236. This is God’s declaration that He remains completely set apart from any idol. What Ephraim attributed to idols throughout its turbulent history was actually and only the work of his God! [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. I have followed the NET Bible in transliterating the specific term used in Hebrew and then attaching the word *locust*. Scholars debate whether these are four different kinds of locusts or four different stages of growth (in the life of a locust). What is clear is that Joel is describing successive locust swarms that wiped out all vegetation. A locust plague was one of the curses promised by the Lord for disobedience (Deut. 28:38). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. I.e., there is nothing for them to make into wine. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Literally, “throw away” or “cast aside.” I am almost tempted to translate it here as “left drooping,” which is what happens when locusts finish stripping the tree of its foliage and the weakened branches give way. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Literally, *white.* [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Literally, the “husband of her youth.” She mourns because he was killed before they could marry. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. The Hebrew word refers to farmers who don’t farm their own property but that of another. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. This section begins and ends with references to the Day of Yahweh. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Some of the OT sacrifices (especially the peace offering) returned a portion back to the offerer so that he could celebrate with his family by eating it in the Lord’s presence. But if all food and produce has been cut off, such times of rejoicing before the Lord are rendered impossible. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. This verse contains four *hapax legomena* (words used only once in the entire OT), making the translation somewhat uncertain. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Literally, “suffer punishment.” [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. The translator is torn between two options: to make vocalic changes and translate “first light of dawn” (*shahar*) as blackness (*shehor*) or to connect the phrase“as the first light of dawn spread over the mountains” with what follows (in spite of the major disjunctive Hebrew accent, *athnach,* in between). I have chosen the latter option in my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. “Pale” translates a word found only here and in Nahum 2:11. Its meaning is somewhat uncertain. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Thus also the NET Bible. I had actually thought of this rendering myself prior to looking at it. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. So newly married that they are still referred to as the daughter’s husband and the daughter in law. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Literally, “his front” and “his end.” But when referring to an army, it refers to the front of an army (vanguard) and its back (rearguard). Thus NASB. Other translations render it “those in the front” and “those at the rear” (NLT). [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. “According to what is normal” translates the word “righteously.” Some have tried to force upon the context an idea of ethical righteousness, but righteousness in its basic sense means “conformity to a standard.” Here the standard in view is that of the normal agricultural season and its necessary rains, which for a dry country like Israel means the rains in the autumn when crops are planted and rains in the early spring before the hot summer sets in. Deuteronomy 11:14 provides a good cross reference: “I will give you the rain for your land *in its season*” (NKJV; emphasis mine). [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. A vat was a reservoir in the rock usually connected by means of a channel carved in the rock to a winepress or oil press. The juice extracted from either the olive or the grape would trickle its way along the channel into the reservoir. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. In other words, God is taking their actions against His people personally. By their inhumane treatment of them, He is assuming they must have some kind of spite against Him. If so, they will not succeed—because He is more than able to turn their attempted retaliation back upon them. The point is not that God is like the spiteful, unstable, unpredictable gods of the heathen, but rather that He responds to men as they respond to Him. *And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd* (Ps. 18:26; NKJV). [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. I.e., instruments for trimming grape vines. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. This word could also be translated “unauthorized persons.” Foreigners, as a category of humanity, will not be *de facto* excluded from the future Jerusalem, but all those unauthorized will. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. The word *valley* assumes a valley that would normally have a stream bed (“wadi”). Many such stream beds in Israel dry up in the hot summer months because of the lack of rain. The fountain pumping water out of Jerusalem will ensure an unfailing water supply for the Wadi of Shittim. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Because this is a present participle, one could legitimately supply a word like *continually* or *permanently* (“Yahweh will reside *permanently* in Zion”). [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. This is not the typical word for shepherd (which we find in v. 2). It is used only elsewhere in the OT of King Mesha of Moab to explain his delivery to the king of Israel of a very large payment of sheep and wool (2 Ki. 3:4). Amos, then, may have been the owner of a fairly substantial “sheep farm.” [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. This is my translation of the *waw* conjunction that begins this clause. The economy falters because the Lord has spoken—this shows that in this context His speaking is negative, a punishment upon His wayward people. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Mount Carmel, near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, is green and lush year round. For the vegetation on its summit to dry up suggests a severe disaster is striking the land. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Literally, “it,” referring to God’s determination to punish the aforementioned nation (cf. NET, “my decree of judgment”). See also 1:6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. A threshing sledge was a kind of wooden sled, the bottom side of which could be imbedded with pieces of rock, flint, or iron in order to grate against grains (like wheat) and thresh them. To thresh a people (“Gilead”) with a sledge imbedded with iron pictures cruelty—unusual harshness in dealing with those you have conquered. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Both Hazael and Ben-Hadad, his son, were Syrian (Aramaean) kings who reigned from Damascus and were constantly at war with the Northern Kingdom of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. “Huge bars of wood, bronze, or iron frequently secured the gates of ancient cities (Deut. 3:5; 1 Kings 4:13).” Jeffrey Niehaus, “Amos,” in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. Thomas McComiskey, p. 342. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. I am admitting by my italics that *ruler* is not in the Hebrew text. Because of the parallelism with the next line (“one holding the scepter”), it seems that it refers to an enthroned ruler (see, for example, Psa. 2:4, “He who sits…”). Alternatively, it could be referring to every inhabitant of the Valley of Aven being cut off. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Most English translations render this as “Valley of Aven.” Aven means that which is false, wrong, or iniquitous, and therefore deceitful or (in reality) nothing. The best guess (that I have read) at identifying this valley is to take it as a derogative reference to Damascus, which was nestled in a valley east of the Anti-Lebanon mountains. If this is what Amos is doing, it is similar to what Hosea does when he refers on occasion to Bethel (“house of God”) as Beth-aven (“house of iniquity”; 4:15; 5:8; 10:5). [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. I have chosen to transliterate this location since it probably refers to a specific (but still unknown) place. Some identify this with *Bit-adini*, an Aramaean kingdom some 320 kilometers north of Damascus whose capital was Til Barsib. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Opinions vary as to where exactly Kir was located. What is clear from Amos 9:7 is that the Arameans came from Kir; their exile back there is, in effect, a sending them back home to where they came from (and where they belong). [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Gaza (representing Philistia as a whole) would conquer a village or town and mercilessly sell the whole population into slavery. No specific place is identified, which might suggest that they did something like this habitually or more than once. Given the location of Philistia in southwestern Palestine and its constant incursions against the Israelites, it is very possible that Gaza did this against one or more Israelite or Judahite towns. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Literally, “a covenant of brothers,” but alluding here clearly to those with whom they had made some sort of treaty. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Their unchecked fury led to cruel excesses in how they treated those over whom they were victorious. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. God does not here condemn, in and of itself, the warring between the two nations, but the indignity toward the bones of a fellow human. “Lime” was sometimes used as whitewash or plaster (Deut. 27:2), which could imply an even deeper level of inappropriate cruelty in using the bones burned to lime to coat a stone wall. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. I.e., the sounds of war, the very venue in which she perhaps felt her prowess. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. The poor were often oppressed because they had no financial or practical means to stave off the greed of those wealthier or more powerful than they. In a legal situation, a poor person could expect nothing but injustice where there was no fear of God present. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. The income from their injustice provides the resources for their worship. God detests such religion and, ultimately, rejects it. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Viewed from the divine perspective, both of these are inestimable privileges—men who speak for God (*prophets*) and men whose consecration to God is particularly noted and accepted by Him (*Nazirites*). Israel, however, despised God’s good gifts. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. This rather obscure verb occurs only here in the OT. Two related nouns (meaning pressure or a pressure-filled situation) occur in Psalms (55:3; 66:11). Based on what follows in vv. 14-16, verse 13 is God’s way of letting Israel know that He is the one preventing them from continuing in their sinful behavior. Their economic collapses (see ch. 4:6-11) are actually God’s way of “bogging them down” in an effort to get their attention and secure their repentance. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Literally, “to know,” but it is obviously more than intellectual knowledge here. God brokered a relationship with Israel, Abraham’s descendants, that He has never entered into with any other nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. These questions introduce the idea of cause-and-effect. Amos uses them to build up to his climax: God has spoken—that’s why Amos is prophesying. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Generally translated “snare” in the Old Testament, it refers here to the aspect of the afore-mentioned bird trap that actually ensnares the bird. Suggestions vary—it could refer to the bait, the trigger, or to the netting itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. A trumpet (think ram’s horn) was a common way to alert a city’s inhabitants of danger or threat. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. The great panic is because of the ever-present oppression. Nobody knows who will be picked off next by the greedy and violent of Samarian society. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. They destroy innocent people by assaulting and maltreating them. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. How to translate this word is still debated. It probably refers to the “corner” or the end of a couch, the kind used in ancient Oriental dining. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Cow is feminine, used here to depict negatively the cruel women of Samaria. Bashan contains some of the best pasture-land in all of Israel; a cow of Bashan would be a well-fed cow. Amos decries the rich women of Samaria who in spite of their wealth oppress the poor around them and nag their husbands into further oppression in order to satisfy their insatiable greed for more. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Literally, *behold,* but here expresses certainty: “Know for a certainty that the days will come…” [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. The meaning of this Hebrew word and the one I have translated as “fish hook” are often understood as meaning “thorn,” i.e., something sharp, pointed, or prickly. A manmade “thorn” could be a hook or some other pointed implement. The context here suggests some kind of pointed implement used to hang meat, like a butcher’s hook or something similar. “Fish hook” may not be the best translation because it would be patently too small to carry a calf (“their posterity”); perhaps some kind of a harpoon is closer to the idea (HALOT). [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. This Hebrew word can mean *last, outcome, or issue*. Some also suggest that when it refers to cows (as it does here metaphorically) that it can mean hind parts. The majority of translations today translate it as *last*, so that the last part of the verse emphasizes that *every last one* of the cows of Samaria will be taken away (see ESV, NET, NLT). However, the word can also mean *issue* or *posterity,* which is how I have rendered it. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Literally, cast out. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. See Lev. 7:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. This records Yahweh’s response to their hypocritical religiosity. Note the repeated refrain in these verses: “You still did not return unto me.” [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. In the two other prophetic passages (Isa. 34:3; Joel 2:20) where this word *stench* is used, it refers to the smell that arises from things that have died. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Literally, “toppling of God.” [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. *TWOT* describes this as a “planned encounter wherein the subject intentionally confronts the object.” [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Some, such as Keil and Delitzsch, take this as God’s revealing to men what their thoughts are. The context here seems to demand God’s divine revelation of Himself (and His plans) to man. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. I have opted for this reading on the basis of Amos 5:8. Admittedly, the consensus of translations is to render it as “He turns the dawn into darkness” (based on the Hebrew word order). However, the strong poetic nature of this verse may explain why the expected *lamed* preposition before “dawn” is not there. The Septuagint and a few Hebrew manuscripts (followed by some commentators, such as Calvin et al) connect the two nouns with *and:* “He makes the dawn *and* the darkness.” This would suggest that God also makes everything in between (Niehaus in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, 1:407). [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Amos’ target is the Northern Kingdom. To reach Beersheba, inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom would have to pass through the full length of the Southern Kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Its impending destruction would render it a disaster area. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. *TLOT* argues for “ignite” (i.e., to penetrate with fire) in this context. The word’s typical meaning in the OT is to succeed or prosper, but this derives from the idea of someone forcefully or successfully splitting open or gaining entry. It is thus used repeatedly of the Spirit *coming forcefully* (“rushing”) *upon* a person (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 10:6; 10:10; 11:6; 16:13). I have here chosen to use the word “blast” to communicate the idea that the Lord will forcibly destroy Israel in a way similar to what a fire does when it “blasts” through an area. The verse is not saying that God will actually *ignite* Israel with fire, but that His destruction of it will be akin to what fire does when it sweeps through (see NIV). [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Bethel is, in this verse, the ultimate target of the fiery wrath of God, for it was the center of the syncretistic worship introduced by Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. This final participial clause is separated from the preceding three because it is the climax. Amos’ point is that the same God whose sovereignty and power are on display in the created world is the God who will bring upon Israel the promised destruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. The gate served as the location for transacting legal business. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Built, presumably, with the proceeds of their corruption. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Israel assumed that God was with them since they were descendants of Abraham and they brought Him sacrifices. They failed to realize that what God wanted was not some ancient bloodline and not mere animal blood but a heart that genuinely sought Him and sought that which was right. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. The word is “pass over” and alludes to what God did in Egypt the night the firstborn were killed. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Niehaus, p. 428. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. That this is the protasis followed by a kind of dual apodosis, see Niehaus, p. 431. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. A grain offering typically accompanied a burnt offering. A burnt offering was one of the most expensive of offerings to the offerer because he received no part of the animal for himself. Even such an offering could not buy God’s pleasure toward their grain (or peace) offerings. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. A peace offering was an animal offering in which part “ascended” to the Lord on the altar, part went to the priest, and part was returned to the offerer for him to eat with his family and enjoy. God’s response here is that even the most “delicious” of (fattened) animals would not be acceptable to Him. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Verse 26 provides a contrast to v. 25. At least during the forty-year-period of chastisement in the wilderness, Israel still brought God some offerings. But in the upcoming exile, Israel will have nothing but their hand-made Mesopotamian deities to carry around and worship. God is so tired of their religious rituals, offered ostensibly to Him but without any real heart for Him, that He will remove their ability to offer Him anything at all. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Literally, “ones trusting,” which in the context here suggests those who have become careless through an overinflated sense of security. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Amos is using a bit of sarcasm here: this is how they view themselves. Of first rank in their own thinking, Amos assures them that they will be first in line for the coming judgment. “The first shall be first” (Stuart, WBC, p. 356). [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. In other words, these are the men to whom “commoners” come for help. Patrons were common in the ancient world. These individuals were typically wealthy or powerful, and those in need of various kinds of help would line up in order to seek from them food, favor, gifts, employment or other essentials. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Literally, “from the middle of the stall” or “from the middle of fattening.” [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. This description suggests the amount of time they have on their hands, frivolously spending the day in merriment and other pleasurable pursuits. Amos mentions David not in order to compliment the idle rich that he was confronting but to point out with a bit of sarcasm how far from reality is their perception of themselves. They erroneously think themselves “little Davids” (NAC) blessing those around them (and perhaps even Yahweh) with their impromptu musical contributions. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. The technical term is possibly crater, the large receptacles used in the ancient world to mix wine. The point is the abundance of wine that they drink. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. There is a play on words in this section using the Hebrew root *rosh* (“first” or “head”). Conspicuous (in v. 1) as the “foremost” (*reshith*) and anointing themselves (v. 6) with the finest (*reshith*) olive oil, they shall be at the “head” (*rosh*) of the line of captives trudging wearily into exile (v. 7). [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. God is declaring the extent of the coming destruction of Samaria. Ten men huddled in one house, who think they have escaped the devastation, will be rounded up and slaughtered. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Grammatically, it is possible that the relative and the person who would burn the corpse are one and the same. Burial, of course, is the acceptable Jewish method of disposing of a corpse, but this verse presupposes an unusual situation with far too many corpses (in far too great a state of decay) to bury properly. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. The translation of this last phrase is a bit of a guess. The essential idea is that as bad as the situation is, no help from Yahweh is to be expected. In fact, the better part of wisdom would be to keep quiet because if you invoke help from Yahweh, He might take notice of you and send you packing into eternity. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Do not picture gravel or even a few scattered boulders but rather a rough, rocky terrain of extended length. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Israel’s abandonment of righteous behavior is just as inexplicable as the aforementioned activity would be. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. Amos’ prophecy of coming devastation purposely parallels Jonah’s earlier predictions of Jeroboam’s successful expansion (2 Ki. 14:25). The extent of their expansion would be the extent of their downfall. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. The word used here (*leqesh*) refers to the fifth month of the year, or March-April, according to the Gezer Calendar (see Billy Smith, NAC). This was evidently the second grass crop and probably the last for the year, since no more rain would come until after the harvest season. (Grass was especially important for making hay, a key source of sustenance for cattle during the winter.) [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. The king had taken his share first; if this second crop failed, the situation for the nation would be dire indeed. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. The word is actually that of contending or arguing one’s case in a legal setting. The context here suggests that Israel has lost the court case and God is bringing upon them the punishment the legal proceedings demanded. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. Literally, “the portion.” The entire land was the “portion” of the twelve tribes. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. This word occurs four times in these two verses (vv. 7-8) but only here in the entire OT. The traditional meaning assigned has been “lead,” thus plumb line (formed from the lead). Some more recent commentators are now suggesting “tin,” but I fail to see how that improves on our understanding of the verses at hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. I use “both” instead of repeating “it is” twice (as the Hebrew does). [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. Or possibly “royal residence” (NASB). In the context (“the king’s sanctuary”), however, Amaziah is emphasizing that Bethel is Israel’s religious center of worship. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. Literally, “drip” or “flow” (“spout,” NKJV). Amaziah is speaking derisively about Amos’ outpouring of words. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. In Hebrew, “end” (*qets*)is similar to Hebrew to “summer fruit” (*qayits*). Summer fruit was the fruit at the end of the harvest time. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. See McComiskey (EBC). Implied (but not stated) is the causal connection between the first part of the verse and the second: the heaps of corpses rotting without any prospect of a dignified burial explain *why* their Temple songs turn to wailing. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. There were a number of ways to trick customers. One would be to make the ephah container slightly smaller than the official size. One could also enlarge the payment due by placing a heavier than appropriate weight on one side of the scales, necessitating more silver to be placed on the other side of the scales in order to balance it. The real irony here is how scrupulous they are about keeping the Sabbath and other religious festivals. During the ban on commercial activity imposed by these religious holidays, they plot additional ways to cheat customers out of a fair deal. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. Probably refers to the collapse of the capitals and the pillars on which they rested. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. Literally, “dig.” [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. Or “vault.” [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. Israel’s time among the nations would be God’s sifting process. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. In this kind of sifting, the good, useable grain falls through the mesh “sieve,” while the gravel pieces and other clumpy foreign material do not. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. These would be the “pebbles” in the preceding verse that failed the sifting process and now face punishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. “Fallen” is actually an active participle and could be translated “collapsing.” This would be how the kingdom of David would look from Amos’ perspective. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. Used metaphorically for David’s empire or kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. The plural pronoun alludes to the two kingdoms—the breach separating the two will be repaired, and they will again be one kingdom under one monarch. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. The masculine singular pronoun most naturally refers to David—the ruins of *his* kingdom will be restored. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. “It” (feminine singular) refers back to “booth” or, metaphorically, to David’s kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. A rare prophecy of Edom that is positive. A remnant of Edom will submit to Yahweh and will be under the authority of the revived Davidic kingdom. Even a perpetual foe like Edom has a place in God’s future kingdom (if they will submit to Him). The apostles (specifically James, the brother of Jesus) saw in this statement God’s plan to include Gentiles in His salvific purposes (Acts 15:15-16). [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. Parentheses make clear that these three poetic lines “interrupt” the words of God that then follow. See also NKJV. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. In dealing with sinners, God has a way of putting His finger on the very thing they treasure the most. He does not do this out of vindictiveness but out of a desire to strip men of their idolatry and turn them fully to Himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. Since Edom’s capital city of Sela (later known as Petra) could only be accessed through a very narrow gorge that in some places was only six feet wide, they felt themselves unassailable. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. “Penetrate” and the word “infiltrate” in the next sentence are translations of the Hebrew verb, *to enter* or *to come in.*  I have translated them as I did here in order to show the negative purpose for their coming. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. Because this word has a prefix (*mem* preformative) that in Hebrew turns a noun into a place, another possible translation is *treasure troves* or *hiding places.* [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. Edom’s allies will refuse to help when she (Edom) flees to them in desperation, shooing Edom back home instead. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. They stood aside instead of rushing forward to help. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. Debate continues as to whether this describes Edom’s cheering when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC or when Jerusalem was successfully invaded during the reign of Jehoram of Judah (2 Chron. 21:16-17) sometime in 848-841 BC. I have opted for the latter, in part because vv. 12-14 seem to both chide Edom for what it has done and warn them against repeating the same action in the future. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. Literally, *look* or *watch*, but the idea here is clearly to watch with joy at their misfortune. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. Drink up is really just the normal Hebrew word to drink, but I am trying to recreate the idiomatic expression. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. Possibly Sardis in Asia Minor, where there was a large colony of Jews. Others have argued for Spain (thus the term *Sephardim* for Spanish Jews) or an ancient country northwest of Media. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. Literally, “away from them,” referring to lightening the ship of the weight of the items onboard. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. Septuagint renders this as Jonah was snoring, reinforcing the deepness of his sleep. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. Literally, “the,” but the definite article is being used here anaphorically and is best translated “that.” They had just referred to Jonah’s God. They are hoping that maybe *his* God would deliver them. Coming from a polytheistic worldview, the sailors would have assumed that some god was behind the storm. That god had to be identified and then appeased. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. Literally, “Because of whom…?” Also v. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. In this context, what Jonah is telling the sailors is that he is a follower of Yahweh. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. This is a curious statement and one wonders how it came up (and why Jonah admitted it to them). A fact of passing interest becomes now an alarming reality. Jonah must have committed some great atrocity against this god for him to respond so violently (with a storm). Thus, the sailors now probe Jonah as to exactly what he has done. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. Arguably, if Jonah would have repented, the storm would have ceased. Jonah, at this point in his story, does not want to repent. He would rather be thrown overboard than go to Nineveh. The cold splash woke him up to his mortal reality and that is when he started praying (see ch. 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. For many of the sailors, this was their first-ever prayer to Yahweh. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Throughout Jonah’s prayer, he evidences great familiarity with the Psalms. He quotes from nine or ten passages in the Psalms. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. It is possible that this should be translated as a question (even if one does not alter the Hebrew text in favor of the Septuagint’s “How?”): “*Shall I ever again behold Your holy Temple?”* As the text stands, it is a statement of confidence; the context, however, suggests a litany of despair. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. The image Jonah is communicating is that of earth’s gates being barred shut with him on the outside. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. This is not so much (in this context) a mental remembering (as if Jonah had forgotten about God) as it is volitional. Jonah chose to reconsider Yahweh and His demands. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. Because Yahweh is the only God who can actually covenant with, respond to, and deliver His followers. If Jonah’s god were no god, he would have not survived being thrown into the stormy sea. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. This is a cohortative expressing “self-encouragement….especially as the result of inward deliberation (in soliloquies)…and also as a more or less emphatic statement of a fixed determination.” GK, p. 319. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. That is, Yahweh has the prerogative to bring salvation to anyone He chooses. We will find out in chapter 4 that the principal reason Jonah did not go to Nineveh was that he did not want the Ninevites to experience God’s gracious deliverance. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. Literally, “great to God,” a Hebrew way of expressing a superlative. Nineveh may very well have been the largest city in the world in the time of Jonah. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. I am translating it with a frequentative idea in order to communicate how Jonah no doubt stopped at various points in the city during his one-day journey in order to repeat his message. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. Some modern estimates place Nineveh’s population in the eighth-century BC at about 100,000 people, remarkably matching God’s words here. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. Technically, plural (“high places”). [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. “The prostitution referred to is idolatry, which the OT consistently regards as spiritual fornication.”Thomas E. McComiskey, [“Micah,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/ebc07?ref=Bible.Mic1.6-7&off=503&ctx=on+would+be+burned.+~The+prostitution+ref) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 405. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. The first three verbs in this verse are Hebrew cohortatives. The sense is difficult to render into English, but the will of the speaker is being emphasized. One could almost render them as “Let me mourn,” “let me wail,” and “let me go” or as “I must mourn,” “I must wail,” and “I must go” [see NASB]. (Not *must* in the sense that someone else is forcing him but that his emotions are forcing his volition.) [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. Some translations render this as ostriches, but the use of this word in other passages suggests a flying creature smaller than an ostrich (e.g., Isa. 13:21; Jer. 50:39). [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. That is, Samaria’s wound. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. The Assyrian invader. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. Gath was the hometown of Goliath and one of the five main Philistine cites. Micah here resorts to allusion—David uttered the same words when news of Saul’s death reached him (2 Sam. 1:20). Micah intensifies the allusion, however: David commanded weeping (2 Sam. 1:24); Micah totally forbids it (1:10). Micah’s point? Stifle your sobs lest your uncircumcised neighbors hear of Judah’s downfall. In addition, the phrase “tell it not in Gath” employs a kind of assonance, by repeating similar sounds. A feeble attempt in English to produce a similar effect might be, “Do not *gab* about it in *Gath*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. *Qere* takes this as a feminine singular imperative, probably referring to Beth-le-aphrah (and her inhabitants). [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. Beth-le-aphrah literally means “house of dust.” [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. Literally, “pass over for yourselves.” [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. The inhabitants of *Shapir* (which sounds like the Hebrew word for *beauty* or *pleasant*) will go into exile in shameful nakedness. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. *Zaanan* is similar in sound to the Hebrew verb translated “issue forth”—the town will not live up to its name. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. *Ezel* is related to a Hebrew preposition meaning “beside” or “near.” A related verb also has the idea of “set apart” (Num. 11:17) or “reserve” (Gen. 27:36). The latter reference (Gen. 27:36) is of some help. Esau complains that Jacob has *taken away* [*laqah*]both his birthright and his blessing; he then asks his father if he has reserved [*etsel*] any blessing for him. These two words also occur in Micah 1:11. The “City Nearby,” set apart to offer protection to others, will mourn because its customary ability to offer protection has been taken away. In a somewhat different view, Bruce Waltke argues that the verb *etsel* means to “withhold” (Ecc. 2:10). Beth Ezel, thus, will live up to its name in withholding protection (*Micah,* TOTC, 169). However, in the previous two lines of v. 11, the point Micah is making is that the towns *do not* live up to their name. Something similar (it would seem) is in view in this final line of v. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. Refers back to the inhabitants of Shapir. They will go off shamefully into exile because neither Zaanan nor Beth-Ezel will be able to offer any help. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. “Refuge” is literally a “place to stand,” but in context it refers to a place where one (fleeing) can take refuge or find safety. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. Maroth, which means “bitter” (e.g., Naomi’s wished-for name change to “Mara”), would taste the bitterness of defeat, since no help would come from Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. Waltke points out that this is not the typical word for horse but is the word for a swift horse—the speedy horses used in the king’s courier service (Est. 8:10). See also 1 Kings 4:28 [5:8, Hebrew], where “swift steeds” (ESV) are distinguished from normal horses. Lachish is being urged to evacuate the city speedily. Consult Waltke’s discussion in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, vol. 2, p. 630. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. Evidently Lachish was a “nursery” for the sins practiced by the Northern Kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Lachish protected the cities of southwest Judah; its fall virtually guaranteed the fall of all the towns and cities around it. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. The “you” here is feminine, probably referring back to Zion. Zion is pictured as a father paying a dowry price for a bride. In this case, the bride (Moresheth-Gath) is being carted off by the Assyrians, at a severe cost to Jerusalem. Sin is always costly and its fuller consequences are seldom thought through carefully. The forceful departure of Moresheth-Gath would be particularly bitter to Micah, since this was his hometown. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. Achzib sounds like the word translated here as *disappointment.* [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. Literally, “a deception.” This word is used only elsewhere in Jeremiah 15:18 of a “deceitful brook,” i.e., a brook that disappoints because it is dry. Here in Micah 1:14, Achzib will disappoint in that it does not offer financial or military help. Both halves of v. 14 emphasize the consequences of the Assyrian invasion upon Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. In Hebrew, Mareshah sounds like the verb to take possession. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. Micah here alludes to David’s flight to Adullam to hide from King Saul (1 Sam. 22:1). “This section (vv.10–16) begins with words that recall David’s lament at the death of Saul and ends with the name of the cave where David hid from Saul. These dark moments in David’s life form a gloomy backdrop to the description of the fall of the towns Micah spoke of…. It is as if Micah saw in the fall of each town and the eventual captivity of the two kingdoms the final dissolution of the Davidic monarchy. Like David, the glory of Israel would come to Adullam” (McComiskey, *EBC,* p. 408). [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Again, Jerusalem is being addressed. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. The “children of Jerusalem’s delight” are the cities and towns of Judah. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. “Might makes right” is the prevailing philosophy of the day. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. God rewards their moral evil with the “evil” of punishment (i.e., disaster or calamity). [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. A verb (נִֽהְיָה) remains untranslated in virtually every version of this verse. Most dismiss it as dittography. Personally, I don’t see why it cannot be the first word of the lament. The full lament would then read as follows: “It has happened, *just as* He said. We have been completely devastated. He trades away the portion of my people. How He removes it from me! He apportions our fields to the faithless.” [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. God had commanded that the lot be used in apportioning Israel’s inheritance (Josh. 14:2). Now, no one will be available to do so. The harsh reality of the principle “you reap what you sow” has kicked into full force. They had oppressed others off the land; now they too will be squeezed off. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. Literally, “drivel on.” The verse quotes the harsh rhetoric of the false prophets against Micah and other true spokespersons for Jehovah. False prophets (and their listeners) do not like negative messages. Words of true prophecy are to them but drivel. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. *They* refers to the false prophets. Micah is the speaker. Another possibility is to take the second half of the verse as the continuation of the speech of the false prophets: “they [Micah and company] must not preach such things *saying that* disgrace shall not be turned back.” However, if the false prophets were continuing to hush true prophets of God like Micah, it seems most likely they would have continued with the second personal plural. See Waltke, *The Minor Prophets* (ed. McComiskey), pp. 643-644. Both this verse and v. 7 record reactions to Micah’s preaching of divine judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. I.e., the splendid inheritance of land that God wanted to give them. The land was ultimately God’s not theirs; to steal it from others was tantamount to wresting it from the original Owner. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. God had intended the Promised Land to be a resting place (Deut. 12:9; 1 Ki. 8:56), but their violent actions toward each other prevented it from becoming so. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Literally, the one “who opens the breach” (ESV), a designation for Messiah. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. Pictured here is the future escape of God’s people from exile. Their king leading them is none other than Yahweh Himself, in the person of Messiah. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. Literally, moustache. That is, they will hide the beard on their lip because of their shame (HALOT). [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. The Hebrew reader cannot help but notice the word repetition in 3:12 and 4:1 involving the Temple and the Temple Mount. One could just as readily translate 4:1 as “Yahweh’s Temple Mount.” [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. Literally, *Ophel*, the area in-between the original Jebusite city (later known as the City of David) and Mount Moriah, where Solomon built the Temple and his palace(s). This area was key to Jerusalem’s defense and was sometimes the mark of a king’s dedication to protect Jerusalem (2 Chron. 27:3; 33:14). [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Poetic parallelism would suggest that counselor here is a synonym for their king. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. Although the verb form resembles the first person singular, it is actually an archaic form of the second person feminine singular. (Jerusalem is the subject.) [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. In Hebrew, 4:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. Another meaning for this word is *to slash* or *cut oneself*; here, however, used with a cognate noun (“troops”) it seems to have the meaning of *to gather* or *to throng* (see Jer. 5:7, “trooped to the houses of whores,” ESV). [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. Referring to the foreign invader (Babylon) that God would use to punish the city of Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. The idea expressed in this word *goings forth* is seen in Num. 33:2; 2 Sam. 3:25; Psa. 19:6; Dan. 9:25; Hos. 6:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Is Micah 5:2 teaching the eternality of the Messiah? The words, ~l'A[ ymeymi (*miymey ‘olam*), translated “from everlasting” (KJV) are always used elsewhere in Scripture to describe “former days” within history (Deut. 32:7; Ps. 77:5; Isa. 51:9; 63:9, 11; Amos 9:11; Mic. 7:14; Mal. 3:4). See *BKC*, 1486; and Allen, 343-44, fn. 29. God’s past eternality is usually expressed in the term *me‘olam* (1 Chron. 29:10; Psa. 93:2; 103:17; Isa. 63:16). On the other hand, *qedem* (“from of old,” KJV), when predicated of God, depicts His eternality (Deut. 33:27; Psa. 55:19; Hab. 1:12). See McComiskey on Micah in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 7:427. Perhaps, the best idea is that His goings forth have been from *time immemorial* (leaving the beginning point undefined). The fact that He will come in the future (from Micah’s standpoint) to Bethlehem but was active in the world since time began suggests implicitly that this is an eternal, divine Being. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. This is not a reference to Messiah’s birth but to Jerusalem’s sufferings (similar imagery was used in 4:9-10). God will (seemingly) “abandon” Israel for a time until her sufferings are complete. This matches precisely with Paul’s words in Romans 11:25ff. As in other prophetic passages, the time of Israel’s return to divine favor occurs in conjunction with a regathering. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. The referent of *his* is the ruler who will come forth out of Bethlehem Ephratah. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. Assyria as the most visible enemy of God’s people in Micah’s day becomes a symbol of the adversaries of God’s people in any age. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. The “seven, even eight” formula also appears in Ecclesiastes 11:2 to communicate “one more than what is necessary or expected.” Thus, here, the idea is a complete array of princely defenders more than sufficient to overcome the (Assyrian) foe. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. It is possible that the Hebrew text here originally read “drawn sword” (פְּתִיחָה) instead of “her entrances” (פְּתָחֶיהָ). It would involve only the metathesis of two letters and (per Waltke) is attested in the Vulgate, Hexapla (fifth column), kaige recension, Ibn Ezra, and Qimhi. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. Or, possibly, depend upon man (NIV). As the NET Bible points out, “Men wait eagerly for the *dew* and the *rain*, not vice versa.” [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. “The ‘sacred stones’ (*maṣṣēbôṯ*) were standing pillars, usually of stone, that represented pagan deities” (McComiskey, EBC, 433). [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. The text is snappish and without a verb. In a sense, no verb or full explanation is necessary in order for Israel to recall the unbelievable act of God in bringing them from Shittim to Gilgal on the other side of the Jordan River. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. Literally, “deeds of righteousness” but as Waltke notes, “His righteousness toward Israel entailed saving them from tyrannical oppressors, and so it comes to mean ‘saving acts of the Lord’” (ed. McComiskey, p. 731). [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. Literally, “humankind.” [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. In other words, to choose to be loyal and faithful to the obligations that life’s varied relationships entail. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. Plural because it either refers to the ruler, judge, and great man working together or to the accomplices of the “great man” who, having heard his evil plans, work with him to bring it to pass. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Note how the verse builds in intimacy—from those living around you (“neighbor”) to a close friend and, eventually, to the wife with whom you share your bed. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. The verb form (cohortative) expresses the determination of the speaker. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. “Enemy” in Hebrew is a feminine noun and, therefore, takes the feminine pronoun. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. Literally, “their ears will be deaf,” but Waltke says equivalent English idiom is “they will turn a deaf ear” (p. 760). [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. “*[M]aśśāʾ* is the ‘burden’ of judgment loaded on the addressee through the prophetic word.” Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, [*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tlot?ref=Page.p+773&off=3292&ctx=+meaning+%E2%80%9Cto+lift%E2%80%9D%3b+~mas%CC%81s%CC%81a%CC%84%CA%BE+is+the+%E2%80%9Cbu) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 773. It is almost always a pronouncement of judgment, thus I have translated it with the accompanying preposition “against.” [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. In other words, Nahum saw a vision and he wrote it down—what follows is what Nahum wrote down; it is his vision in written form. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. Literally, “place,” referring to Nineveh. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. 2:1 in Hebrew. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. I.e., God will not need to strike a second blow—the first “blow” will end her [Nineveh’s] existence permanently. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Most translations take this as causal (“for”); the NET Bible takes it as emphatic (“surely”). I am suggesting a concessive idea, which is essentially the opposite of how Maier takes it (*Nahum,* pp. 190-192). Virtually all commentators admit the extreme challenge this verse holds for the exegete. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. I am suggesting the point of comparison of the analogy of an entangled thorn-bush. Rather than take the preposition *‘ad* as expressing comparison (which it rarely if ever does), my translation retains the idea of extent (“as far entangled as is possible”) that is at the core of this preposition. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. Not all would agree with my effort to convey the point of comparison behind the analogy. See Waylon Bailey (NAC, p. 181) for other options. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. Nothing, not even her self-defenses or self-engrossment, will prevent Nineveh’s fall. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. Shift to a feminine singular pronoun indicates that Jerusalem or Judah is in view. God’s previous “affliction” of them was due recompense for Judah’s many sins against His holiness. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. Masculine singular (referring to Nineveh or Assyria). [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. A very free translation of the text. Literally, “from your name it will not be propagated anymore.” [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. See NASB. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. Or “worthless” (ESV). [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. The Hebrew particle *ki* normally expresses comparison but here it seems to be for stress (or confirmation), a use admitted by HALOT, Gesenius (118x), and Longman (in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 802). See, for example, 3:6, where *ki* is used to express identity or equivalency (*not* “like a spectacle,” but “an actual spectacle”). [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. Ezekiel 23:14 identifies the color worn by Chaldean soldiers as red. (We know from history that Babylon attacked Nineveh and destroyed it.) [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. Chariot is masculine singular and so is the preposition in Hebrew. I am suggesting by my translation that the preposition refers back to chariot (not Assyria). [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. Literally, “cypresses,” thus a reference to some kind of wooden weapon that can be held in the hand and brandished. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. This is the verb used of David (1 Sam. 21:14), when he pretended to be insane. Here, it is used of chariots “running like mad” (see also Jer. 46:9). [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. Literally, “appearance,” but here that appearance is of a torch in flame. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. This is a portable shield or covering used to protect those besieging a city. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. Longman (*The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 804) suggests that the reader “imagine Nahum once again viewing the attacking army from the watchtower of Nineveh…. It is as if he [Nahum] were there.” [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. The palace disintegrates from the effects of the river water splashing against it. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. Both this verb and the next (“carried away”) are prophetic perfects. The *perfect* tense as it stands here would normally be translated in the past tense. However, the action it is describing is obviously still future—Nineveh has not fallen yet. Thus, it seems best to render the perfect tense here as future. Why the use of a typically-past form of the verb to describe something still future? It heightens the level of certainty—Nineveh’s destruction will certainly come to pass. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. Water is of great value in the ancient Near East because of its scarcity. The imagery of a “pool of water” pictures Nineveh as a place of abundance and comfort. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. This retains the pointing of the Masoretic Text. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. Many versions and commentators emend the preceding phrase so that it is the waters of Nineveh that are fleeing away. In such a case, Nineveh is pictured as a leaky reservoir. However, it seems best (and in complete accord with the context of v. 9) to maintain the Masoretic text. Nineveh—the “permanent” place of abundance—will now be abandoned by its inhabitants allowing it to be completely plundered (v. 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. Assyria is pictured variously as a lion, who prowls and devours prey, and as a lion’s den, where the “prey” (i.e., treasures) are stowed away. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. A lion’s cub that has not yet been weaned. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. Some have pointed out that “lions sometimes killed their prey by placing both paws on their victim’s throat” (Longman, *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 810). [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. Literally, “holes” or “caves.” [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. This is the answer to the question posed in v. 11; Yahweh is against her and therefore Nineveh’s doom is certain. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. Or, possibly, “horseman,” but *charioteer* fits imagery of v. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. Literally, “clans” or “families.” It refers to a group of people related by blood. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. That which is horrible or creates a reaction of abhorrence. Thus, pagan idolatrous practices and objects are an abomination to God. In the context here, it would refer to that which is horrible (“filth”) to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Although this may seem unusually cruel for God to do something like this, remember the biblical principle that God treats people the way they treat Him and others (Psa. 18:25-27). Those who have pursued abominations will be rewarded with filth. Those who so eat of the fruit of their ways will hopefully come to their senses, awake to righteousness, and live. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. The verb means (in this context) to wag the head in order to show grief or sympathy. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. I.e., just like Thebes. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. Being intoxicated is sometimes used as an imagery for being filled with judgment or destruction—the influence of either sends a person reeling. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. Some debate as to what the various biblical terms for locust mean, but *yeleq* is typically understood to be the young locust that does not yet have developed wings and thus still creeps (see NASB). [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. This term (‘*arbeh*) is apparently the most general word for locust. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. Nahum is likening the merchants to these young locusts. Assyria had multiple traders. It had profited tremendously from the gains of such international commerce. But its merchants would now flee before the coming invaders, taking their goods with them and leaving Nineveh bare and needy. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. The rest of the verse will explain in what way Nineveh’s officials are like locusts—in the “heat” of the ensuing invasion, they will melt away. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. See NKJV; NASB. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. Literally, “devastation.” They devastate the innocent by assaulting and plundering them. See Robertson (NICOT, p. 140, fn. 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. Literally, “lifts up” or “rises”; here with the idea of spreading, overflowing, or abounding (NIV). [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. What was “play” or a sort-of grisly game (v. 10) now takes on deadly seriousness as they (the Chaldeans) turn from laughter to brutality. See Robertson (NICOT, p. 155). [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. They “incur guilt” is a mild way of describing the brutality they use toward those in the city they have conquered (Robertson, p. 155). A look at the difference among English translations will reveal the challenge the first part of v. 11 holds. I have attempted a translation that follows the Masoretic pointing and fits the context. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. This is not the only place where Habakkuk interjects his sentiments (see 3:14, 16). [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. Habakkuk pictures Babylon as a greedy fisherman, who preys on the nations at will and does so for his own pleasure. He (Habakkuk) holds God, as the one raising up Babylon, responsible. Habakkuk in these verses is in a mental wrestling match that pits his knowledge of God’s hatred of sin against God’s willingness to use a wicked nation like Babylon as His instrument of punishment upon His chosen people. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. Literally, “creeping things,” but the context suggests sea crawlers. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. Meaning, any of mankind that he desires. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. These verses illustrate the use of the “bare” Hebrew imperfect and the simple waw imperfect to communicate frequentative action. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. Obviously, the metaphor alludes to Babylonian military might. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. See NASB. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. That is, offering worship to his might (and to his gods) as he empties his “net” of all the spoil he has taken. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. Literally, “pant” or “yearn.” Keil quotes Hitzig: “True prophecy is inspired, as it were, by an impulse to fulfil itself” (*Commentary on the Old Testament,* vol. 10, p. 400). [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. Robertson argues for this gloss of *emunah*. His discussion is absolutely excellent (NICOT, pp. 178ff). [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. The parallelism with “that which is not his” makes the point clear: the wealth he is taking to himself is actually more like a pledge than plunder—it will need to be recompensed to its rightful owner “when the day of reckoning comes.” F. F. Bruce, “Habakkuk,” in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 865. This also makes sense of the “until how long?” that sits rather awkwardly (grammatically speaking) in the verse. The riches he heaps to himself will not be his for long. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. I.e., make you tremble through their treats and intimidation. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. Literally, “they have sinned against their own soul.” [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. What they build ultimately goes up in smoke at the hands of another (NET Bible). See Jer. 51:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. God tumbles the kingdoms in order to magnify His name and bring a universal knowledge of Himself. See Isa. 11:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. This word could also be translated *wrath* or *poison.* The point is the malice behind making one’s neighbor drunk. This is not a “party” among friends. This is one man using intoxication to expose the other shamefully and then exploit him for his own greedy ends. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. Literally, to have one’s foreskin uncovered. They will reap what they have sown. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. Literally, “teacher of falsehood”; in context, it identifies the graven image as a fake, one that has no ability to instruct since he cannot speak (see last half of verse). [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. There is no clear interrogative particle in the Hebrew text but it makes sense to render the clause as a question as many translations do (ESV; NASB; NET; NIV; NLT). The other option is to include it as part of the command to the silent stone: “Rouse yourself! It will impart instruction.” The preceding *athnach* (a major Masoretic disjunctive accent), however, suggests the clause goes more closely with that which follows. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. Yahweh is the only God who can speak. If earth-dwellers would be silent, they might just hear Him! [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. An obscure musical term (the LXX renders it “with song”) that I have transliterated. It does tell us, as F. F. Bruce points out, that this last chapter is a different genre than what has preceded (“Habakkuk,”in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 878). See also the use of *selah* (vv. 3, 9, 13), which besides here occurs only in the Psalter. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. It is technically singular, “report.” [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. It is actually a noun in Hebrew, literally, “and there is the hiding place of His strength.” [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. In other words, the “rays” of power that mankind does see issuing forth on their behalf are but the edges of His ways—His full strength remains hidden from view for our own protection. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. This verb may possibly come from the Hebrew root meaning “to measure.” God “measured” the earth. I have opted for the translation above because of the grammatical and semantic parallelism. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. I.e., that which proceeds from Him, what He does, His activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. “Cushan” occurs only elsewhere as part of the compound name *Cushan-Rishathaim* (Judg. 3:8, 10). Robertson (NICOT, p. 228) makes the compelling suggestion that perhaps *Cushan* here alludes to this Mesopotamian king. The reference to Midian in the next clause lends support to the idea that the time period of the Judges is in view. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. Literally, “rod” or “staff”; here, it likely refers to arrows. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. An incredibly difficult clause in the Hebrew, whose meaning is uncertain. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. This is “the imagery of waves that stretch their foaming whitecaps heavenward, reaching ever upward to enclose more of the world within their domain” (Robertson, p. 234). [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. Zephaniah is the only prophet whose lineage is traced back four generations. This is done in order to show his royal descent from King Hezekiah. As a distant cousin of Josiah, Zephaniah would have been a much-needed help to the young king’s reforms. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. Literally, “taking away, I will bring to an end.” [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. Alec Motyer in his comments on Haggai 1:1 notes how this expression—that appears repeatedly in the prophets—acts “as a seal, stamping the prophet’s word as the authentic divine word” (“Haggai,” in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 973). [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. In other words, the “mess” that wicked mankind has made on earth will be removed as well as the transgressors themselves. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. The word here (*chemarim*) occurs only elsewhere in 2 Ki. 23:5; Hos. 10:5. Based on these two passages, Keil concludes that the *chemarim* were a special order of priestly-figures who allegedly worshipped Yahweh but idolatrously, such as at high places and at Bethel with its golden calf. In both 2 Ki. 23:5 and here in Zeph. 1:4 they are distinguished from Baal worship. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. It is very possible that the reference here is to the god *Molech*, a word formed by pointing the consonants of the word “king” with the vowels of the word “shame,” but as it stands in the Masoretic text it reads “by their king.” The sin being condemned is that of syncretism, an attempt to straddle the fence religiously. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. Literally, “inquire of” Him, what Motyer aptly describes as a “practical atheism that treats God as an irrelevancy” (“Zephaniah,” *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 913). [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. Think *pagan fashions*—those who have abandoned a clear-cut stand for Yahweh and instead adopt the pagan customs of the culture(s) around them. “The strange apparel shows the estranged heart” (Kleinert, “The Book of Zephaniah,” *Lange’s Commentary,* p. 15). The collocation with princes and king’s sons suggests that it is the leaders of society that are dressing this way. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. Commentators widely link *leaping over the threshold* with the Philistine practice of not *treading on the threshold* (1 Sam. 5:5). The thought of imported foreign practices fits well with the context of v. 8; however, v. 9 suggests a new category of offenders singled out for divine punishment (note the repetition of *on that day*). In addition, v. 9b uses a participial clause to clarify the sin of those who *leap over the threshold*: they fill their masters’ houses with ill-gotten gain. Thus, *leaping over the threshold* vividly pictures the greedy eagerness with which these individuals procure wealth in sordid ways. There is another possible interpretation. The word “threshold” is only used in the OT (outside of Zeph. 1:9) of the threshold of a temple (1 Sam. 5:4-5; Ezek. 9:3; 10:4, 18; 46:2; 47:1). “Masters” in this verse could be a majestic plural and refer to “their Lord.” This then could be a reference to corrupt priests who fill the Lord’s house with their contraband. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. This was on the north side of Jerusalem, the side of Jerusalem most vulnerable to attack since it lacked the steep slopes found on its other sides. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. A newer section of Jerusalem (probably northwest of the Temple). [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. Some have suggested that “hills” must refer to a sector inside of Jerusalem (given the geographical progression in the previous terms). If so, it might refer to an area known in that time period as “The Hills.” Multiple hills actually comprised the city of Jerusalem before various building efforts changed (somewhat) the topography. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. *Maktesh* is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, as if it is a place name. If so, the name is unknown from any other text (biblical or other). The word can mean mortar (Prov. 27:22), a bowl-like object in which one would grind grain with a pestle, or refer to a topographical hollow place (Judges 15:19)—“a circular-shaped depression in the land’s surface” (NET Bible). This latter option seems to fit best the context and contrast with “The Hills” (Zeph. 1:10). Perhaps, in English vernacular, we could dub it “The Hollows.” Whatever the case, the rest of the verse makes clear that it was a place of market activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. Literally, “people of Canaan.” The term *Canaanite* in the OT sometimes loses its ethnic connotation and refers to those in the mercantile business. This is true even as early as the book of Job (40:30). [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. Literally, “those who weigh out silver.” [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. Motyer (“Zephaniah,” p. 921), explains it this way: “In the refining process, wine needs stillness. At the right point, however, the liquid must be racked or drawn off from the impurities that have sunk to the bottom. If this is not done, these impurities [“lees”] infect the wine, making it bitter and unpalatable. Zephaniah implies that the lees have repossessed the wine, making the whole a sour, jellylike mass.” It therefore describes here men who are “stagnant” or “complacent.” [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. Men and women fashion gods in their own image: these men who are complacent and idle assume Yahweh to be like them. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. Remarkably similar to Deuteronomy 28:30, 39, which may suggest that Zephaniah’s ministry fell, at least in part, during the time after Josiah discovered the “Book of the Law.” See discussion in O. Palmer Robertson (NICOT), pp. 254-256. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. The verb has the idea of to grow pale (under the duress of whatever emotion). Here, the “emotion” is their lack of shame. Their insensitivity to the Lord brings forth no appropriate blush. See Robertson, p. 291; Motyer, p. 926. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. Meaning the day of opportunity to repent. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. Literally, “be hidden” or “concealed.” [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. The verb is actually impersonal and could be translated more literally, “one will drive *her* away by mid-day.” [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. I.e., the victory would be accomplished rather easily. (Robertson, p. 298). [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. Ezekiel 25:16 links Cherethites with Philistines, with whom they evidently had ethnic or geographic affinities. Both seem to have migrated to Palestine from the Aegean Sea area. Cherethites might be related to the word Crete, a specified place of origin for the Philistines (Amos 9:7). During his refugee days in and around Philistine territory, David gathered to himself a band of these foreigners who, although mercenaries (one would assume), remained extraordinarily faithful to David over the years (2 Sam. 8:18). [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. Or “wells,” a noun derived from the verb “to dig” (Motyer, pp. 932-933). However, the parallelism with “enclosures for flocks” supports the translation I have suggested above. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. Motyer (p. 933) renders this expression as “restore well-being.” [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. Literally, “shrinks.” [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. The identity of these two birds is something of a guess. Some even suggest “hedgehog” as a translation for the second. However, its collocation with the previous term (which is mentioned in Leviticus 11:18 as a kind of unclean bird) suggests that it also is some kind of bird. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. Also, “boastful” or “headstrong.” This word is used only elsewhere in the OT of the “reckless fellows” that Abimelech, Gideon’s son, hired to aid him in his bid for kingship (Judg. 9:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. *Profane* means to treat like an ordinary object that which is set apart as sacred. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. I independently arrived at this translation (but see NASB). [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. In the sense of transform or change. God transforms the speech of the peoples. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. Literally, “lip,” as the organ of speech. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. Perhaps, better, “my suppliants”—those who entreat Me. It often (but not always) involved sacrifice (see TWOT), where a follower of Yahweh would bring a sacrifice and then make his or her entreaty to Yahweh. The idea of gift or offering comes into view in the last phrase of the verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. Literally, the needy and the insignificant (powerless). Here, however, these terms refer to those who recognize their spiritual impoverishment and find in Yahweh and in His ways all they need. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. There shall be no “predators” to disturb their peaceful enjoyment of the “pasture” God has given them. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. That is, his “legal” decisions to punish them. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. “Those from you” is actually a separate verb clause in Hebrew: “they are from you.” I merged it with the preceding verb clause in order to help the Hebrew text read a bit more smoothly. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. The italics I have supplied bear testimony to the challenge of this verse. (Keil says every clause of this verse is difficult.) Against Motyer (“Zephaniah,” *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, pp. 960-961), I have concluded that those that grieve are the “remnant” who mourn the loss of Israel’s religious festival activities because of Jerusalem’s destruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. Shame turns to fame, because of the wondrous working of her God on her behalf. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. This Hebraic expression “saying” (*lemor*) occurs ten times in Haggai’s short book, far more times proportionately than in any other OT book. It leads to a redundancy in English that is a bit unusual—“He said, saying....” Its function is to introduce direct quotation. What I opted to do here in the book of Haggai was to include only this first occurrence of “saying” (*lemor*) in my self-translation. The other nine occurrences of “saying” is marked by a colon (:) in the text and quotation marks. To be clear, I made sure that my translation contains no other colons. All colons in my actual translation are “glosses” of “saying.” [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. I have translated this past tense to reflect the Hebrew perfect; however, this may very well be a repeated statement on the part of the people. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. This word is used of Solomon’s work to cover over the Temple’s stones with cedar planks (1 Ki. 6:9; 7:3). This was a finishing touch to enhance or beautify a bare stone structure (see also Jer. 22:14). Thus, through Haggai, God is pointing out that His people seem to have plenty of time to finish up or even embellish their own homes but no time to build His House. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. And what kind of consequences those actions (“ways”) are bringing upon you. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. This is where Israel would find wood, which is not overly prevalent in the land of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. Haggai uses this expression (and its variant, “this is the verdict of Yahweh”) proportionately more than any other book of the Old Testament, occurring twelve times in two short chapters. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. Literally, “runs.” [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. Yahweh had come to them through the words of His prophet Haggai. By listening to Haggai’s words (which were from Yahweh), they showed reverence for Yahweh Himself. Verse 13 emphasizes even further the divine origin of Haggai’s message. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. All those who responded with obedience to God’s message and messenger received divine strengthening to do the work they had submitted to do. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. In comparison to the splendor of Solomon’s Temple, the present Temple they were building was very ordinary and even measly. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. This triple repetition of the phrase “this is the verdict of Yahweh” seems redundant and even, to a certain extent, unnecessary. If God says it does He really need to confirm the truthfulness of what He has said? Yet He does so in order to convince suspicious and forgetful mankind of the validity of His words. It reminds me of the words in Hebrews (6:13): “For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself” (ESV). [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. See Motyer, “Haggai,” in *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 985. The verb (“covenanted”) reflects the typical OT language of covenant-making (literally, “to cut”). [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. God had on previous occasions “shook the earth” on behalf of His people, such as at Mount Sinai (Judg. 5:4; Psa. 68:8; 77:18). David also sees the Lord as “shaking” the heavens and the earth on his behalf by delivering him from King Saul (2 Sam. 22:8). [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. The noun is singular, thus “Desire” in some translations (NKJV). However, the verb (“shall come”) is plural, indicating that “desire” is a collective noun—“desirables” or “treasures.” [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. Or “Ask now the priests for a ruling” (NASB). [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. See also v. 18a. Both of these occurrences of the phrase “take your ways to heart” include an additional Hebrew particle of urgency or plea which I have glossed with the verb “do.” [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. A signet represents authority. It was typically a clay seal bearing an identifying mark unique to its owner. To possess another’s signet conferred upon the carrier the authority of the owner himself. Clearly, Zerubbabel is a type of Messiah, especially the rightful authority that Messiah will have as Yahweh’s agent. Such a prophecy kept alive before the people the Davidic prophecies and hope. The fact that this prophecy is future and did not find fulfillment in Zerubbabel himself lies in the accompanying cataclysmic-type events (2:21-22) and in the eschatological, future-oriented term “in that day” (v. 23). [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. The fathers repented but having learned, almost too late, that God’s words—even His negative ones of judgment—always come to pass. The exiles of Zechariah’s day should learn from this that if they will repent *now* and turn to Yahweh, they can experience His words of restoration—the “return to them” He promised in v. 3. From the outset of his book, we see a spiritual emphasis in Zechariah. The people had already begun to build (Hag. 1:14) and had been doing so for 6-8 weeks, but there was still a need for a whole-hearted return to Yahweh. A man can begin to do the work he knows he ought to do long before his heart is really fully yielded to God. God wants a return to *Him*, not just a return to the *work*. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. See 1 Sam. 15:16 for a similar usage. Most translations take this as an accusative of time: “during the night.” Evidently, all eight visions were given in one night. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. Given the date of these visions (520 BC), the seventy years here refers to the almost seventy years that Jerusalem had been without a temple (since 586 BC). [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. Literally, “good.” Some translations translate with “gracious” (ESV; NASB) or “kind” (NIV; NLT). One clear meaning of the Hebrew word *tov* (“good”) is “pleasant” or “desirable” and that’s the nuance I have sought to give to it here with my translation “welcome.” Clearly, it was a positive reply, pleasant to the ears of the petitioner. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. Literally, “helped for evil,” i.e., helped the disaster along until it exceeded the bounds of humaneness and decency. See Isa. 47:6. Also possible is the rendering of the NKJV: “and they helped—*but* with evil *intent*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. Someone who works with stone, metal, wood, or gems. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. A length of rope used to make measurements. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. Different from the man with the measuring line, who is also (presumably) an angel, and clearly different from the interpreting angel. He is introduced here in the text in a rather commonplace way, but it is his speech that continues throughout the chapter. He commands the interpreting angel, indicating that he is above him in authority. As he speaks, he uses pronouns interchangeably of himself and of Yahweh. He, then, is the Angel of Yahweh—the same such Messenger who is riding on a red horse in the first vision. Identifying Him as such is key to understanding the enigmatic “you shall know that Yahweh of hosts has sent Me” that occurs twice in the vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. My understanding is that the young man is the man with the measuring line. He is the one who needs to be informed of the futility of measuring Jerusalem. Some interpreters identify the young man as Zechariah, an interpretation that would not materially affect the overall point of the vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. “The doubling of the interjection is designed for heightened rhetorical effect and lends a tone of urgency to this message.” Mark J. Boda, [*The Book of Zechariah*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nicot38zec?ref=BibleBHS.Zec2.10-11&off=3257&ctx=+doubled+in+Isaiah.+~The+doubling+of+the+), ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), p. 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. They are called Zion although they live in Babylon (cf. Psa. 84:5). [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. Literally, “He has roused Himself.” The imagery is that of an animal being awakened, rousing himself, and stirring from his den in order to hunt down prey. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. The Angel of Yahweh. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. The cleansing was taking place with the Angel of Yahweh’s knowledge and permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. There is actually some debate as to where the protasis ends. Boda argues that the first four clauses are the protasis and only the last (“I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here”) is the apodosis. The issue is whether *wegam* (“and also” or “then also”) can introduce an apodosis. He has some Scriptural support for arguing that it does not (Exod. 18:23 is perhaps his best example, seconded by Ecc. 6:3. Some of his proffered examples—1 Sam. 12:14; Mal. 2:2—do not apply directly). Boda dismisses out of hand Marvin Sweeney’s suggestion (in *Berit Olam: The Twelve Prophets*, vol. 2) that the emphatic you (*attah*) that introduces the third clause (*then also you* ***yourself*** *shall render justice in my house*) marks the beginning of the apodosis. However, there is some biblical support for the idea in Ezek. 5:11, where an emphatic pronoun plus *wegam* introduces the first apodosis clause (much like it does the third clause of v. 7). Admittedly in Ezek. 5:11, a change of subject takes place between Jerusalem (“you”) in the protasis and “I” (Yahweh) in the apodosis, whereas in Zech. 3:7 there is no such change in subject between the protasis and apodosis. The evidence from those quarters thus results in a kind of hung jury. English translations consistently begin the apodosis with *then also you yourself shall render justice in my house* (i.e., the protasis has two clauses and the apodosis, three). However, in verse 7 itself there are a couple of reasons why I opt (with some hesitancy) for the “four protasis” idea: 1) all four clauses contain an imperfect verb, whereas the last contains a *waw* perfect—grammatically signaling a shift to the apodosis; 2) the third clause (*then also you* ***yourself*** *shall render justice in my house*) does not seem like much of an apodosis. That is, it seems more like a command to be obeyed than a blessing to be granted. In fact, translating it as part of the apodosis has led to its mistranslation (e.g., “preside over my temple,” NET; “govern My house,” NASB), and even some wrong interpretation (see NET Bible notes). The verb means “to grant proper redress” or “to execute justice.” It alludes to one of the Levitical and priestly duties of settling difficult legal cases (Deut. 17:8). [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. The privilege granted Joshua is direct access to the Lord in the same way that angels do. UBS Handbook suggests the following: “I will give you authority to come before me in the same way as these angels here come before me.” In other words, he will resume his priestly role as the mediator for His people. To paint a bit bigger picture, if Joshua (given his position as high priest) represents Israel, then it is their obedience that will enable them as a nation to function as mediators to other nations, fulfilling God’s purpose in their being a “kingdom of priests” that mediated a knowledge of Him to those around them (Exod. 19:6). [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. I am inclined to think that the word “seated” deserves more mention that it normally receives. Everyone else in the vision is standing, including the Angel of Yahweh (note the rather “awkward” addendum to v. 5). In fact, the verb “to stand” is used some six times in vv. 1-7. The significance may appear from v. 10, where it is these very men who invite others to join them under their vine and fig tree, possibly symbolizing that their priestly work of offering sacrifice for sin is finished—forgiveness has already been granted (v. 9). See additional footnote on v. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. It always causes suspicion to replace a time-honored translation like “the Branch,” which virtually all conservative English translations retain. In spite of all that, I have chosen the above translation because “Branch” conjures up a wrong impression to the average English reader of a rather large growth from the trunk of a tree, which *tsemah* (the Hebrew word) decidedly is not. It refers to new growth, more what we would call a “shoot” or a “sprout.” I have added in italics the word *Davidic* because this Messianic designation speaks of Messiah’s sprouting from the seemingly dead trunk of David’s line. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. It may be that “you” (masculine plural) alludes back to Joshua’s companions, who are designated men of a sign (v. 8). The same word “companion” or “neighbor” that was used in v. 8 occurs here in v. 10. This makes clear how they are “men of a sign”—they picture the peace and prosperity that the Millennial Kingdom will usher in. If we are right in viewing them as Joshua’s fellow-priests, an additional aspect of the imagery may be that they will *sit* every man under his vine and fig tree. Priests, by nature of their duties, *stand*. For these priests to sit (as we find them in v. 8) may suggest that cleansing has been accomplished (as v. 9 promises). [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. The interpreting angel was absent from the previous vision. In addition, Zechariah is to pay special attention to this vision since it involves him quite directly. In fact, for the first time the interpreting angel will ask *him* a question (v. 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. Lips in the sense of spouts where one would put a wick. These lamps would burn seven times brighter than a lamp with only one wick. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. The angel’s question makes clear that the referent of Zechariah’s *these* is masculine plural. The olive trees would be the closest natural masculine referent, but the other possible masculine referent would be the lamps. Two things indicate that Zechariah has the lamps in mind and not the olive trees: 1) the angel’s rather long explanation in vv. 6-10 ends by focusing on “these seven,” probably referring to the seven lamps; 2) Zechariah asks about the olive trees in v. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. That is, the “final stone” (NLT). [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. These words “grace, grace to it” can be understood in different ways. The community could be recognizing how God has favored the project (thus, its completion). They could also be expressing a kind of prayer-wish: “Favor… May God favor it!” Or they could be expressing their delight in what they see: “Beautiful… it is beautiful!” [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. Literally, “they shall rejoice and see,” but the first verb adverbially modifies the action in the second—i.e., “joyfully behold,” etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. Most English translations render this expression (“tin stone”) as “plumb line,” but Hebrew has other words for plumb line. It seems more likely that this “tin stone” is referring to the tin plate (“tin tablet,” NET) upon which an inscription would be engraved and then placed on the final stone of the building project. The seven eyes rejoice in the tin stone because it indicates that the project is nearing completion (whereas “plumb line” indicates the project is still in progress). [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. More specifically, any protrusion from a plant or tree with a cluster of “fruit” on it (in this case, olives). [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. This is the first time these conduits (“pipes,” ESV) have been mentioned, but clearly they function to carry the olive oil from the trees to the bowl on the lampstand. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. Literally, “sons of fresh oil.” Most translations render as “anointed ones,” but this not the standard term for that. Here, these two “sons of fresh oil” are symbolized by the two branches full of olives that are pouring out their oil into the conduits and from there into the bowl on the lampstand. In other words, the two “sons of fresh oil” are not the *recipients* of the oil but rather the *dispensers* of it, thus I have rendered this as “ministers of fresh oil.” The two witnesses in the book of Revelation are referred to as the “two olive trees… before the Lord of all the earth”—a clear allusion back to Zechariah 4:12-14 (11:3-4). They provide “oil” and light to their listeners through their witness and their prophesying. If we hunt for a parallel to these two witnesses in the time of Zechariah, the closest is Haggai and Zechariah who provided such “light” and the energy of the Spirit through their prophetic ministries (Ezra 5:2). The two witnesses more closely resemble them (Haggai and Zechariah) than Joshua and Zerubbabel, whom many interpreters identify as the two “olive branches.” [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. Note the repetition of things *going out* in these last three visions (5:3-6, 9; 6:1, 5-8). [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. To be honest, almost no English translation renders this verb (*naqah*) as “remains unpunished,” although any commentator who really tackles this word admits that this is the regular meaning of the verb, especially in a legal or oath-swearing context (see, e.g., Exod. 20:7; Num. 5:19, 28, 31). Only Isa. 3:26 (and possibly Joel 3:21) provides any support for the idea of “to be cut off” or “to be banished.” However, several things in the context here suggest that we should go with the “normal” meaning of the word (i.e., “to remain unpunished” or “to be cleared of wrongdoing”): 1) the obvious legal/judicial nature of the context, 2) the perfect tense of the verb, which suggests that this is something already happening not a judgment about to transpire (admittedly, the tense of the Hebrew perfect is extremely flexible), 3) the rather uncommon meaning “to be emptied” in Isa. 3:26 is a little awkward in our context since the thief or the perjurer himself is “being emptied”; it would be more natural if their house were in view (but that does not receive mention until the next verse), and 4) the judgment takes place in v. 4, when the curse settles on the house of every thief and perjurer and destroys it. To summarize, the curse is going out *because* justice is not being executed. Thieves and perjurers are being “cleared of wrongdoing,” either by society as a whole or the courts in particular. Yahweh has sent out the curse to ensure that “a false witness will not go unpunished” (Prov. 19:9). The execution of justice in society is one of extreme importance to Yahweh. It will be one of the fundamental characteristics of the reign of the Messianic King (Isa. 11:3-5), and one of the Servant Songs is devoted to the Servant’s task of bringing forth justice among the nations (Isa. 42:1ff). [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. Possibly future, “I will send it out.” However, the symbolism of a *flying* scroll suggests the curse is already in motion, i.e., Yahweh has already sent it out (thus, the use of the Hebrew perfect here). [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. Those translations (e.g., NIV, ESV, and NLT) who translate “their eye” as “their iniquity” are accepting an emendation to the Masoretic text. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. Interpreters probably miss the point when they try to identify the mountains (typically as Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives). By identifying these mountains as mountains made of bronze, Zechariah is attempting to identify what he is seeing in words available to him. We should probably not picture literal mountains (as in topographical structures on planet earth) but two monumental (fortress-like?) structures that resemble mountains. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. In other words, all four sets of horses are strong. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. They went out to present themselves before the “Lord of all the earth.” It may be that He is in the chariot with the red horses (in the first vision He rode a red horse), which explains why that chariot does not issue forth as the others do—He is the Commander. He then is the one who issues the command allowing the various chariots to go forth to their task. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. The piling up of verbs here (“*sought* to *go* to *patrol*…”) suggests a bit of impatience on the part of the charioteers. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. The verb is feminine plural and perhaps alludes to the chariots and its occupants (never mentioned here but no doubt assumed). [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. It seems clear that the Speaker here is the Lord of all the earth (“***My*** Spirit”). [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. Nothing suggests an interval time-wise between vv. 9-15 and the eight visions that preceded. It may be that the action here commanded of Zechariah was given the same night he saw the visions and is something he is to do as soon as possible (perhaps when day breaks). [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. That which Zechariah is to take is supplied in the next verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. Literally, “crowns,” but verse 14 uses a singular verb to refer to it. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. Literally, “build in.” God’s Servant will *build* the Temple, but these who come from afar *build in* the Temple, meaning they will help in its construction (see ESV). [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. This is one of several ways to translate the opening words of v. 2. In doing so, I am following the Masoretic accentuation which calls for a strong disjunction between the words “Bethel” and “Sharezer.” Baldwin, however, makes an appealing suggestion that Bethel-Sharezer is actually the name of one official (probably Jewish), and Regem-melech is his title (TOTC, pp. 151-153). Jeremiah 39:3 (“Nergal-Sharezer”) does support the idea of such a compound name. This delegation (per Baldwin) came from Babylon, their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem explaining the four-month gap between the fifth-month fast (about which they are asking) and the ninth month (when the word of the Lord came to Zechariah). Another support for the idea that this delegation had come from Babylon is the connection with the end of Zechariah 6, which also mentions some exiles who had arrived from Babylon. However, I am a bit hesitant at this point to embrace her decidedly minority position and one that departs from the Masoretes’ understanding of the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. The fifth month was the month when Jerusalem was destroyed (Jer. 52:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. The seventh month was the month that Gedaliah, the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to rule Judah after Jerusalem’s destruction, was assassinated by a man named Ishmael (Jer. 41:1-2). [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. The *Negev* is the desert that lies immediately to the south of Palestine.The *Shephelah* is the Hebrew term for the foothills that lie between the Mediterranean coast and Israel’s central mountain range. During the Persian period, Judea was a smallish province that did not include the *Negev* or most of the *Shephelah*. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. I.e., the earlier generation. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. Literally, “they made their heart a diamond.” [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. Most English translations opt for “streets,” but the Hebrew word refers to free, open space, much like the plazas of European cities. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. Or, possibly, “if it seems impossible in the eyes…” [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. “Righteousness,” here in the sense of honestly, sincerely, or truthfully. Israel will reciprocate God’s unwavering faithfulness with a faithfulness of their own. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. Alludes back to the lack of peace that characterized the land previously (v. 10). There is a bit of a play on the word *peace* (which is much broader in meaning than our English word). A “seed of peace” is a seed that will succeed or bear fruit, as the rest of the verse makes clear. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. Literally, “I have returned, I have planned.” The idea is that God has “revised” His previous plan of punishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. Or “and with judgments that lead to peace.” [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. The month when Jerusalem’s walls were breached by the Babylonians (Jer. 39:2). [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. The month when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the city of Jerusalem for the last time (Jer. 39:1). [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. One reason that Israel can treat others honestly and kindly is that God is good, and His promises for the future magnificent. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. My translation reflects the volitional aspect of the Hebrew cohortative used here. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. Or, possibly, “surely toward Yahweh will be the eye of mankind and all the tribes of Israel.” But see Zech. 9:8 where God’s eye is upon His people and upon His house. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. This may suggest that the Temple, the future depository of the crown in 6:14 and that which was still under construction in 8:9, is now in existence. To those who have finished rebuilding it, God is declaring His protection. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. Or, possibly, “legitimate” (see HALOT; NET). We almost always assume a moral semantic element when we find the word “righteous” or “righteousness,” but the word has at its heart the idea of conformity to a standard. If a king arises whose royal pedigree is unquestioned, he would be righteous in the sense of legitimate—his claim to the throne conforms to the requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. Literally, “one who is being delivered.” God helps Him and He is therefore victorious. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. The referent is Jerusalem (v. 9), as is made clear by the use of the second person feminine singular pronoun. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. This is an allusion to Joseph and the pit where he was placed before he was sold into Egypt (Gen. 37:24; compare also Jeremiah’s experience, Jer. 38:6). The “waterless pit” of Zechariah’s prophecy might refer to Babylon, as a specific place of captivity. Another possibility is that it remains unnamed so that it is broad enough to include all places where the Jews have been held captive. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. Once again, this may allude to Joseph and his afflictions. He also was made a prisoner (Gen. 39:20), and it was probably during his time in prison that his future seemed most hopeless. The point? No matter how hopeless the case of Zion’s prisoners, they are actually “prisoners with hope.” Zion’s future is bright (just as Joseph’s was). [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Perhaps this also alludes to the Joseph story, as he was given a double portion among the twelve tribes (Gen. 48:5; Josh. 14:4; Ezek. 47:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. There is some debate as to whether the eating and drinking imagery here should be taken literally or whether it should be given more warlike overtones. Hebrew will sometimes string together two verbs (connected by “and”), but the first verb supplies the manner of the second verb. Thus, here, it could be that “eat” actually modifies “subdue” and “drink” modifies “roar.” The result would give the verse a purely military feel. I will paraphrase: “they will subdue the sling stones of the enemy and, by doing so, devour them. They will roar in battle like those who have become boisterous from drinking too much wine. They will be filled with blood just like the sprinkling basins at the corners of the altar.” [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. Boda (NICOT, p. 593) proposes that Yahweh’s goodness and beauty are in view here: “How great is His goodness and how great is His beauty!” His suggestion has some appeal and deserves more study. Merrill (p. 232) also notes it as possible (as does Barker, *EBC,* p. 667), but ultimately argues that context favors God’s people as being comely and beautiful because of His deliverance of them. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. Sometimes transliterated as “the teraphim” (NASB). The term always appears in the plural in the fifteen times it is used in the OT and usually with the article on front. They were apparently some kind of statuette or figurine, associated on occasion with divination (Ezek. 21:21; 1 Sam. 15:23—note parallelism with “witchcraft” or “divination”; possibly, 2 Ki. 23:24). They could be small enough to hide in a camel’s saddle (Gen. 31:34-35) or big enough to mistake for a man (1 Sam. 19:13, 16). In the context here in Zechariah, they are consulted to give counsel or, perhaps, to provide rain. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
534. See ESV. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
535. “Emaciated” (HALOT). [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
536. Or, possibly, “avenge.” It the same verb I have translated “call to account” with reference to the male goats. The root idea is one of paying a visit in order to inspect. It can then include the consequences (whether good or bad) of that inspection. [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
537. Imagery is that of a corner tower (battlement) used metaphorically to refer to a chieftain or ruler. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
538. Referring specifically to those leaders mentioned earlier in the verse: leader, tent peg, and battle bow. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
539. Literally, “He,” and some translations render as a reference to Messiah or Yahweh (NASB; NET). But immediate context is about those whom God restores to the land. In favor of the singular is perhaps the idea of “smiting the waves in the sea.” This would most naturally be a divine action. Keil & Delitzsch make the interesting observation that this could be an allusion back to God’s presence in the pillar of fire and cloud leading His people during the time after the Exodus from Egypt. If so, this verse would picture God (or Messiah) leading the way across the “sea of trouble” and smiting the waves in the sea on behalf of His people who are following in His wake. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
540. The last of three big trees mentioned here—cedar, cypress, and oak. These three probably represent offices of leadership (see v. 8 below). [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
541. Literally, that which is high or lofty. It then comes to designate that which sets something apart as “loftier” or more glorious than something else. For the Jordan, its “glory” is probably the dense thickets or bushy undergrowth in which the lions can safely prowl and hide. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
542. See NKJV. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
543. The noun form of the verb used at the beginning of chapter 10 to describe the wretched or emaciated condition of those sheep without a shepherd (10:2). Here it alludes not only to those emaciated through oppression (due to lack of genuine care) but also to those who have increased spiritual sensitivity to the things of the Lord (see v. 11). The two ideas often belong together, as it was often those who most followed God who became victims of the cruelty and corruption of others. ESV reads “sheep traders” here instead of “afflicted of the flock” as per the LXX. [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
544. Also “Pleasantness” or “Favor.” [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
545. Some versions render as “tribal chiefs,” “governors” (KJV), or “leaders” (NET). There is not as much difference between “tribal chief” and “clan” as one may think. Clans were families, designated by the prominent leader from whom that clan had descended. For example, the various descendants of Edom led to the formation of various Edomite clans or families (Gen. 36:15-43). I have chosen “clans” here (Zech. 12:5-6; cf. 9:7) over “tribal chiefs” because the whole clan of Judah seems to be involved, working in concert with their leaders. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
546. See ESV. [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
547. One of the many clear indications in the OT that the Angel of Yahweh is deity. [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
548. Possibly “the Spirit.” However, when Zechariah refers elsewhere to the Holy Spirit, he uses a personal pronoun to show its relationship to Yahweh (“My Spirit,” 4:6; 6:8; “His Spirit,” 7:12). With some hesitation, I have opted to translate this as a reference to their spirit, attitude, or behavior (akin to the later “spirit of uncleanness,” 13:2). No doubt, however, it is the working of the Holy Spirit that brings such a change to their spirit that they will entreat God’s favor and forgiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
549. Over an only child or over a firstborn child when it dies. [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
550. Many have seen this as a reference to the place (otherwise unknown) where Judah mourned the death of King Josiah (2 Chron. 35:25) after he was killed by Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
551. The use of the Hebrew word “by itself” eleven times in the span of three verses communicates vividly how the spirit of mourning will penetrate into each, individual unit of Jewish society. One could almost infer that they will mourn as a nation but they will do so as individuals. In other words, this is not a superficial “group conversion” to Yahweh and His Messiah. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
552. Most probably refers to one of David’s children by that name (2 Sam. 5:14; Luke 3:31). [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
553. One of the families of Gershon. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
554. Elijah wore something like this (2 Ki. 1:8) and it may be that this became standard prophetic dress. [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
555. See McComiskey (p. 1221). [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
556. Or, possibly, “between your arms” (NKJV; NASB) and could thus refer to wounds on one’s back (ESV) or chest (NLT). The text is definitely not referring to wounds *in* his hands, and the reader should not see in this a reference to Christ’s nail-pierced hands. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
557. McComiskey (pp. 1223-1224) contends that God will turn His hand *toward* the vulnerable of the flock. Grammatically, the expression can go either way; the context is the determining factor. In my opinion, the context suggests a scattering that will even affect the vulnerable among the flock. Only later (vv. 8-9) do we discover that a third of the flock will be spared. [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
558. Literally, “little” or “insignificant ones,” thus here in context the lambs of the flock, who would be most vulnerable and most in need of protection. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
559. Such as in the times of Joshua (Josh. 10:14, 42) and of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:29). [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
560. Now addressing directly the half of Jerusalem that has not yet fallen on that future day when the nations have surrounded it and half conquered it. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
561. Azal is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
562. That is, there will be no normal or natural light (see v. 7). [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
563. Thus, Keil, p. 621; Boda (NICOT), p. 762; McComiskey, p. 1233; et al. [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
564. In other words, what Zechariah is describing defies human experience or knowledge. [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
565. The eastern sea is the Dead Sea. The western sea is the Mediterranean Sea. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
566. Currently, the topography of the area is hilly. In that day, it will evidently be lifted up and smoothed out to resemble a plain or plateau. See McComiskey, p. 1236. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
567. I reversed the order of the verse in my translation in order to smooth out some of the native Hebrew redundancy. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
568. Canaanites were the very antithesis of holiness, their religious practice being particularly responsible for the cultic abominations into which Israel fell. Israel even allowed such abominations into the House where God had put His name (Ezek. 8). No such abominations (or their practitioners) will have any place in the Temple of that day. This reminds me of God’s harsh rebuke to Israel in Ezek. 44:6-8, and His determination to keep out of His sanctuary every “foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh” (Ezek. 44:9). [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
569. This word *massa’* literally means “burden” (e.g., Exod. 23:5). It comes to refer to a prophetic message delivered to a prophet that he is to “carry” to a certain recipient or group of recipients. Smith (WBC, p. 301) says it is “something the prophet must accept, carry, and deliver to others.” Used 34 times in the OT of the “prophetic burden,” it is generally used to introduce a negative message, something “heavy” (to carry on the burden imagery) for both prophet and recipient; Stuart (p. 1278), however, warns against carrying the negative connotation too far. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
570. In other words, “in what way or by what means have you shown us love?” [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
571. The verbs “love” and “hate” in Hebrew carry more of a volitional idea and not as much of the emotional connotation that they do in English. God “hated” Esau not in the sense of an emotion of revulsion but in the sense of not choosing to enter into a special relationship with him and his descendants. [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
572. The fact that Israel still exists and is in its land and Edom is long gone is proof positive that Yahweh has loved the descendants of Jacob. [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
573. This verb could also be translated “inflict a curse upon.” [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
574. Often translated “forever,” it actually refers to a time of indefinite length. [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
575. Some (NASB; NET) render the verb “to be great” more as a wish—“May Yahweh be magnified beyond the border of Israel!” However, in context, Israel is not wishing for Yahweh to magnify Himself beyond their borders, they are confessing that He has. [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
576. And—keeping the main point of this oracle in view—this great God loves them. It is almost as if Israel will realize that her territory is the place where God’s greatness originates and then spills over into all other nations. Israel’s territory becomes a very visible manifestation of God’s very special love for them. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
577. I.e., ritually unclean. The sanctity of the gift has been violated because it has not been offered according to God’s regulations. [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
578. A synonym for “altar” above but now viewing it (God’s altar) as a table upon which one offers food to the Lord. This is in consonance with the first part of the verse—Israel’s bringing to God “bread” that is ritually unclean. [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
579. My effort to give force in English to the Hebrew particle “please.” [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
580. Thus the work of Yahweh’s “Messenger” in 3:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
581. Simply, “defiled,” but a modal sense predominates (Stuart, p. 1307). [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
582. Literally, “this commandment,” but it refers to the judgment which God has promised to bring on them in vv. 2-3. See also v. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
583. Literally, “the curse,” but here it does not refer to any specific curse but to curse in the abstract (Verhoef, p. 238) or as a collective (Stuart, p. 1311). It could be translated “a curse,” “curses,” or “cursing.” [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
584. This is more than just a stern verbal warning. What God rebukes loses the ability to function or continue. [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
585. Literally, “*one* will carry you away with it,” i.e., “The curse is that the priests will be taken where the dung goes.” Douglas Stuart, “Malachi,” *The Minor Prophets,* ed. McComiskey, p. 1314. [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
586. Stuart, p. 1317. [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
587. I.e., “What I covenanted to give him…” [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
588. Literally, “in peace.” To walk with God “in peace” probably has the idea of someone wholly or completely devoted to the Lord in their personal conduct. *Shalom* can have the idea of “completeness” or “intactness” (Amos 1:6). [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
589. Literally, “keep” or “guard.” A priest’s lips keep the knowledge of God by faithfully transmitting it to all seekers. [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
590. The idea is that God’s humbling of them is completely in accordance with their rejection of Him and His ways. The judgment God metes out is always completely just. [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
591. I.e., in their application of the Law. No doubt this includes twisting the interpretation of the Law to suit those who give to them materially. [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
592. See Lev. 19:8 and Stuart, p. 1332; Keil, p. 650. [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
593. A look at the various translations evidences the challenge of this clause. The KJV (“the master and the scholar”) follows the Vulgate and Luther. The Targum and Peshitta read “son and grandson.” The Hebrew word “one who awakes” (in my translation above) occurs in a few Hebrew witnesses as “one who witnesses,” the idea being then the one who bears witness and the one who responds to that witness. These are just a few of the more sane options suggested by commentators. The exact meaning of the expression will perhaps remain permanently elusive due to our distance from the colloquial Hebrew of Malachi’s day but the point of the expression seems to be clear: every person, regardless of category, including their descendants. [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
594. The anathema seems to be upon all those who have taken a foreign wife *and* continue to worship Yahweh as if nothing is wrong. [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
595. See NKJV; NASB. [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
596. That is, the woman with whom you have made a covenant. [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
597. Read v. 15a as a continuation of v. 14 in the sense that Yahweh continues as the subject. This evidently is the position of Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant,* pp. 148-67; but his volume was unavailable to me as of this writing. See Clendenen (NAC), p. 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
598. Only two other translations that I consulted (NIV; NLT) also include *you* here. It seems clear to me from v. 14 and the remainder of v. 15 that Malachi does not depart from addressing Israel in the second person in v. 15a. This, I believe, is an oft-overlooked detail that contributes to rightly understanding the clause at hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
599. It seems clearly appropriate in light of the companion and covenant language of v. 14b to infer that “one” here refers to the original creation of marriage as an institution that makes two one (Gen. 2:24). [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
600. This is the only place where I have departed from the Masoretic Text but only in the matter of the understood vowels. The consonantal spelling of “flesh” and “remnant” are absolutely identical; only one vowel (not inserted until centuries after Malachi wrote) distinguishes the two words (*shear*=remnant; *sheer*=flesh). V. 15 continues (after this clause) by zooming in on “the oneness”; thus, it seems that this clause also is referring to that oneness. The Hebrew *lo* (“to him” or “to it”) refers back to the oneness in which God united husband and wife. Reading the text as *flesh* is thus in harmony with the flow of the verse, but it also maintains the consistency of Malachi’s other usage of *spirit.* He only uses *spirit* in his book elsewhere (2:15b-16) to refer to the *spirit* of the men involved in divorcing their first wives. The marital oneness encompasses both *spirit* and *flesh*. Obviously, the act of divorce involved a *bodily* separation or putting away. What the men needed to be reminded of here was that the bodily act stemmed from a wrong spirit (attitude, disposition, or purpose). If they would guard their spirit and keep in mind God’s original purpose for marriage (seeking a godly offspring), then they would not divorce their first wives. [↑](#footnote-ref-600)
601. There is no interrogative particle or other indication that this is a question but occasionally the context seems to demand a question even in the absence of a particle. See, e.g., 1:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-601)
602. I have placed *perpetually* in italics but it conveys the force of the participle (“seek”). God did not just seek a godly seed from the first couple. He continues to do so as a part of His plan that there would always be a godly “seed of the woman” who would oppose the “seed of the serpent” and from which would eventually come the Deliverer (Gen. 3:15). [↑](#footnote-ref-602)
603. As I mentioned in the previous footnote, this seeking of a godly offspring extends far beyond just the children of one couple, although it includes it. This goes back to Genesis 3:15, the verse we refer to as the *protevangelium*. Maintaining a godly offspring in the earth is not peripheral to God’s purposes; it is central. It was from that line that THE Seed of the woman would eventually emerge as THE Deliverer, but it is also essential that in every age there exists a godly remnant who will do “battle royal” with the seed of the serpent and keep alive the victory that will ultimately prevail (Rom. 16:20). Your and my rearing of godly children is part of a grander divine purpose and plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-603)
604. This verse is so difficult that Stuart (pp. 1340ff) essentially opts not to attempt the passage’s meaning. My attempted translation and footnotes are an effort to make sense of a very challenging text but are not intended to communicate an unwarranted dogmatism. Helpful summaries of other interpretational options are found in Verhoef (NICOT), pp. 275-277; Merrill, pp. 363-364; Baldwin (TOTC), pp. 261-262; Clendenen (NAC), pp. 349-357. [↑](#footnote-ref-604)
605. Literally, “he hates,” with the subject undisclosed, leading some to refer this back to the man who “hates *his wife* *and* sends *her* away” (ESV). However, a slight vocalic change would turn “he hates” into a participle with the subject undisclosed but understood as being Yahweh (since He is speaking). Both understandings are frankly possible and either way, the text warns of inescapable consequence for divorce. [↑](#footnote-ref-605)
606. I.e., the wrong he has done to his wife in divorcing her will come back on his own head (Psa. 7:16; cf. Judg. 9:23-24) or, more precisely, mark him publicly and inescapably, like a stain in one’s clothing. [↑](#footnote-ref-606)
607. Thus, v. 16 gives additional reasons for guarding one’s spirit and not dealing faithlessly with one’s wife: God hates it and allows it to bring its own inescapable consequences. Clendenen (p. 369) quotes C. J. Collins: “He who is wise will watch for the first stirrings of resentment, which might turn into dislike, and repent of it immediately, lest he deal treacherously with her whom the Lord has given to be a blessing.” [↑](#footnote-ref-607)
608. A fuller was someone who laundered clothing, in a day when there was no proper soap for clothing. The “soap” mentioned here is literally “a cleansing agent made of alkali or potash” (Clendenen, p. 388); such “soap” might be more akin to our modern bleach—not in terms of its ingredients but in terms of its potency. [↑](#footnote-ref-608)
609. Literally, “in righteousness.” This is the kind of offering that God has yearned for throughout the book of Malachi (1:10-11, 13; 2:12-13). [↑](#footnote-ref-609)
610. Israel, like many “religious” backsliders, remains blind to their own faults. They go through the rituals of their religion but have no real heart for the God for whom they are ostensibly performed nor for the statutes that are revelations of His will. [↑](#footnote-ref-610)
611. Literally, “the house of the treasury,” a place where offerings dedicated to the Lord could be stored and protected. [↑](#footnote-ref-611)
612. In the sense of benefit, gain, or profit. This reminds me of Peter’s words when he wants to call the Lord’s attention to the sacrifice he and the other disciples have made: “Behold, we have left all that is ours and followed you” (Luke 18:28). The one who serves God for self-gain has forgotten the benefit he has already received—he has only come to the Lord and followed Him because of the miraculous working in his heart that saved him from the kingdom of Satan and of darkness (Luke 18:26-27). To be free of such a master is reward enough. [↑](#footnote-ref-612)
613. Stuart (p. 1378) contends that “before Yahweh of hosts” should go with the opening part of their question: “What gain is there from Yahweh of hosts if we keep His charge and walk mournfully?” Either way, Israel’s view of God’s precepts is far from Christ’s promise: “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:30). They make it sound as if walking with God is a drudgery and His service a burden that must be borne martyr-like. [↑](#footnote-ref-613)
614. Those who have decided to live life independent of God and His ways. [↑](#footnote-ref-614)
615. I.e., they get away with their audacious behavior toward God. [↑](#footnote-ref-615)
616. The verb has the idea of one’s ears being trained or turned toward someone who is speaking. [↑](#footnote-ref-616)
617. Such an intransitive use of this verb is rather uncommon, but Malachi clearly uses it this way in 4:3 and apparently does so here as well. See Stuart (p. 1384). [↑](#footnote-ref-617)
618. This term is used repeatedly in the OT of Israel as God’s covenant people and the special position they hold before Him (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psa. 135:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-618)
619. The need for God to spare them in the Day when He acts becomes apparent in 4:1: it will be a Day that burns like an oven. But God, 2 Peter 2:9 asserts (and proves with illustrations—see vv. 1-8), *knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment* (NKJV). [↑](#footnote-ref-619)
620. The dispute continues as to whether “sun of righteousness” is a Messianic term. Most modern translations do not take it as such (but see NKJV; NLT). In context, “sun” is the metaphor used to picture righteousness—“the sun, namely, righteousness.” (Think of it as you would “the breastplate of righteousness,” where what is really in focus is the righteousness, not the breastplate.) Righteousness (here with the idea of vindication or deliverance) is thus pictured as the sun. The vindication of the righteous will shine forth in the coming day with the brightness of sun light and bring to them the “healing” which their long injury at the hand of the wicked (see 3:5) has patiently anticipated. For the wicked, the “light” of that day is that of an oven, setting them ablaze (4:1), so different from the healing and refreshing warmth which the righteous will experience. Having said all that, it is the Lord Himself who will vindicate His own. He it is who shines forth on the Day when “He acts” (v. 3). And Zechariah, John the Baptist’s father, seems to refer back to Malachi’s metaphor when he describes *the Sunrise from on high* that will visit God’s people (Luke 1:79; NASB). [↑](#footnote-ref-620)
621. Literally, “wings.” [↑](#footnote-ref-621)
622. “To bring back the heart” is probably the idea of “recapturing the heart” or “regaining one’s loyalty.” See Stuart, p. 1395. [↑](#footnote-ref-622)
623. The Hebrew preposition (“toward”) can also mean “in addition to” or “along with” (Gen. 28:9; Exod. 20:3; Deut. 19:9; Jer. 4:20; Ezek. 25:10; Amos 3:15). See Stuart, p. 1395. Thus, the idea here might be that God will recapture the loyalty of both the fathers and the sons through the ministry of “Elijah.” In other words, the verse is not describing the turning of fathers’ and sons’ hearts to each other but the mutual turning of their hearts to the Lord. This fits remarkably with how Luke quotes this passage from Malachi with reference to John the Baptist (Luke 1:16b-17): “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (NKJV). Luke cites the phrase from Malachi in conjunction with John the Baptist’s future role of turning people’s hearts back to Yahweh. [↑](#footnote-ref-623)
624. Literally, to strike the earth with a “ban.” This is the same word used of the items in Jericho that were placed under a ban (Josh. 6:18). Such items would either be destroyed or dedicated to the Lord. Here, the clear implication of the text is that God will strike the earth with the “ban of destruction.” [↑](#footnote-ref-624)