

The Covenant as the Basis of Holiness

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Illustrated by the Book of Hosea

Introduction

This paper will seek to examine the contribution, at times unique, offered by the writings of the prophet Hosea, to the Old Testament understanding of Holiness. Hosea's concern with the covenant and Israel's response to it offers insight into this understanding of holiness as covenant based and further as a matter of relationship with God rather than simply rule-keeping.

The Covenant as the Basis of Holiness

Prior to the covenant at Mt Sinai, Israel had little concept of the holy beyond that of separation to the god/gods, an understanding commonly found in Ancient Near East Religion¹. This concept did not carry moral nor ethical connotations nor any relational implications beyond that of 'belonging' to the 'god' concerned². For Israel holiness was to have a significantly deeper meaning and the covenant provided new insight into what God meant when he called them to reflect his holiness.

Old Testament scholars have noted the resemblances between the covenant and the treaties of the ancient world. These 'suzerain treaties' identified the 'great king', detailed the historical background between the king and his vassals, emphasised the disposition of the king, set forth the obligations of the vassals, always including exclusive loyalty to the king, stipulated that the document be deposited in the sanctuary for the vassal and that it be read publicly at intervals, and set forth the rewards or punishment for keeping or violation the terms of the covenant³. Within this framework of the ancient

treaty, much was revealed to the Israelites about God's holy character. It reveals his grace, seen through his redemption of the Hebrew people and his willingness to bind himself to his people. It shows his righteousness, his profound concern for how people are treated⁴ and his desire for social justice⁵. It expresses his faithfulness and how he acts⁶ as well as his uniqueness-only he is holy. It also reveals God's plan for humanity, 'God gave the people the covenant that he might live in their midst.'⁷

The Covenant as Relational.

Through the covenant God was 'calling the Israelites into a unique relationship with God in which they are expected to live lives that are consistent with his.'⁸ This relational aspect of the covenant is significant, particularly when considering the covenant's implication for the holiness of God's people, if God was to dwell among them they were also to be holy, reflecting the character of God's holiness. This holiness had ethical implications but as the *Shema* makes clear 'God wants his people to be holy because they love him with heart, soul and might (Deut 6:4-5)'⁹. This love reflects, in turn, his love for them, and so 'faithfulness, love, justice, honesty, kindness and purity emerge as aspects of divine holiness that are to be replicated in the people of God.'¹⁰ God's love for the Israelites is the motive for his deliverance and covenant with them;¹¹ it was not merely a legal contract nor a commercial transaction.¹² The covenant was the result of God's initiative, responded to by the people out of their own choice.¹³

Hosea

A number of the aspects of holiness that are found in the covenant and which God calls for in his people are clearly, and in some cases uniquely, reflected in the book of Hosea. Hosea uses the word 'covenant' rarely¹⁴ but rather uses the attributes of the covenant as the framework for his message to

the people. Hosea calls people to return to the covenant and to holiness of life, making it clear that this return is relational and that ritual and rules, in and of themselves, are insufficient.

The nature of this call reflects the unique contribution to the tradition that Hosea makes: 'religion is first and foremost a matter of relationship with God' and it is 'personal'. On God's side it consists primarily of love and compassion and gracious condescension; on man's side it consists of dutiful love and humble trust.¹⁵ Through his own marriage to Gomer-bath-Dibblaim, Hosea saw the relationship between God and Israel as that of husband and father¹⁶ with its attendant attributes of love and loyalty, compassion and grace. Through this enacted prophecy Hosea learned that at the core of the covenant is God's love for his people, expressed in the exodus, and that God seeks a response of 'steadfast love' and 'knowledge of God' one that they have failed to deliver. His marriage made visible the truth of their covenant failure, for they had

Failed to make meaningful connections between their theology, history and worship on the one hand, and their real life problems....they acted as if faith in Yahweh alone were an impracticable policy for life. As a result they dishonoured him even as they thought they continued to honour him. ¹⁷

The God of Love and Grace.

The prophecy of Hosea draws attention to the God of the covenant as a God of love and grace who seeks relationship with his people with all its attendant joys and pain. This deep love for his people, Hosea saw, dated from the very beginning

When Israel was a child I loved him, Out of Egypt I called my son,
Hos 11:1. ¹⁸

Yahweh had given the people life and had blessed them and Yahweh had expected the people to respond in turn with love, devotion and righteousness.¹⁹ Their response was, however, to entangle themselves in the search for prosperity and power, particularly political power within the international arena bringing with it a lifestyle offensive to the love of God. Greed, passion, injustice, political intrigue, treachery, self-indulgence and a disregard for the poor became a part of the life of the Israelites.²⁰

It was not that the people had abandoned religion, they remained religious, 'they proliferated the religious sites and readily made the offerings to appease the deities.'²¹ But they had become complacent and apostate, their sacrifices were now hollow, vain and empty. Syncretism had compromised the theology and practice of the Israelites, and Hosea condemns the 'spirit of whoredom' (4:12, 15. 5:4). Their love is now 'self-centered and destructive because one of the parties to the relationship has a previous commitment which promises 'no other gods'' (Exod. 20:3).²²

The Lord had provided for his people both the essentials of life and the luxuries; this provision was credited, to Baal, the Canaanite fertility God.²³

For she said I will go after my lovers; They give me my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'

Hos. 2:5b.

Yet despite their rebelliousness, their apostasy and their failure to live in relationship with God, God still loves his people. This is vividly depicted in the living analogy of Hosea's marriage to Gomer.²⁴ God uses the prophet's life experiences to bring him to a deeper understanding of the covenant and the nature of God revealed in that covenant.²⁵ In Hosea 3:1-5, God 's relationship with Israel is reflected in the prophet's relationship with Gomer.

The Lord said to me again: 'Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other God's and love raisin cakes.'²⁶

Like Israel, Gomer was unfaithful, and her children speak of the judgment of Yahweh,²⁷ yet just as Hosea took her back so Yahweh is willing to take back the nation he loves (2: 14-23).

Through the marriage allegory (chapters 1-3) and the prophetic oracles Hosea points to the constancy of Yahweh's love (11:9).

What is new is the depth of Yahweh's love for a sinful people, as Eichrodt wrote " for the first time in the history of Israel, the message of the love of God is heard in Hosea's proclamation as the center of God's action with his people...Hosea breaks through this sober reticence and dares to speak of Yahweh's affection for Israel using the chief expression for the powerful passion which joins a man and wife."²⁸

The same one who declares in 13:9: 'I will destroy you O Israel, who can help you' also asks in 11:8 'How can I give you up Ephraim? How can I hand you over O Israel?...my heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.' God agonizes over the actions of the people of Israel and his response because of the deep love he has for them.

Idolatry abuses God's sacrificial self-giving love²⁹ and was a 'violation of the cardinal stipulation of Yahweh's covenant and the source of the moral rot that had poisoned the national character.'³⁰ . It breaks the first commandment of the Decalogue, and the great commandment of the *shema*, 'love is the heart of the covenant relationship',³¹ and Hosea portrays idolatry as adultery. (4: 12ff, 2:5, 5:7, 9:1). This unfaithfulness and idolatry is set against the backdrop of Yahweh's grace, and is an affront to this love and grace.

Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruits on the fig tree in its first season, I saw your ancestors. But they came to Baal-peor, and consecrated themselves to a thing of shame, And became detestable like the thing they love.

Hos 9:10³²

He loves these people 'despite their blatant unfaithfulness ... which he cannot for a moment condone, and despite their fatuous and brutish scale of values.'³³ In chapter two the idea of bringing her back is introduced, there is a price to be paid for the adultery of Israel but the 'marriage' between God and Israel will be saved (2:6, 9-13 cf. 2:14ff).³⁴ Hosea attains 'the richest and most profoundly developed understanding of the idea of love in the whole Old Testament' and he 'brought out overwhelmingly the quite irrational power of love as the ultimate basis of the covenant relationship...'³⁵

The covenant contributes content to the Israelites understanding of holiness, without which their understanding would be, at best, shallow and compromised by the cultural understandings. Hosea shows that the God of the covenant is one of holy love and grace and significantly, what that love and grace look like; in a metaphor they can interpret and understand. This love is an integral part of the holiness of God 'it is the incomprehensible creative power of love which marks out Yahweh as the wholly 'other.'³⁶ It is also strongly linked to the holiness of God:

Love truly flows out of God's holiness, a holiness that loves and binds rather than repels or separates... "the deepest expression of the unity of holiness and love is given by Hosea." (11:9).³⁷

Through his use of the marriage metaphor and his personal experiences Hosea is able to break fresh ground

The prophetic re-shaping of the terminology of holiness took a quite different line in Hosea. The prophet who dared, in opposition to the legalistic and institutionalist interpretations of the covenant relationship, to expound the force behind the divine purpose of fellowship in all its inconceivable spontaneity as undying love, recognized in this love the living power which is set in complete contradistinction to every potentiality of the created order. Hence for him love is a part of the perfection of Yahweh's nature and a basic element in holiness. ³⁸

The God of *Hesed*

Another significant way in which Hosea uses the covenant to provide insight into holiness is thought the Hebrew concept **hesed**, a predominant theme in the book of Hosea. That God acts in *hesed* has been described as the 'classic message of Hosea'. ³⁹

It is 'the most central of the terms expressive of divine activity within the covenant relationship between God and Israel.... God is *qodesh*, he acts in *chesed*.'⁴⁰ *Hesed* is a rich and profound concept and has been translated as 'loyalty', 'faithfulness', 'goodness', 'steadfast love', 'kindness,' 'mercy', 'grace', 'lovingkindness' 'forbearance' and 'compassion'⁴¹. It 'has a strong relational aspect that is essential to any proper definition of the term' and while used to describe the relationship of people to people⁴² it more frequently 'describes the dispositions and beneficent actions of God towards the faithful, Israel his people, and humanity in general.'⁴³

God acts in *hesed* or 'covenant loyalty' and can be relied upon to honour his promises to his people, it is 'his personal commitment to be faithful'⁴⁴ it means 'taking the obligations of the relationship seriously.'⁴⁵

Divine loyalty within covenant involved both God's commitment to Israel and the ever new free decision of God to continue to honour that commitment by preserving and supporting the covenant community. Divine freedom and divine self-obligation were held together in this single word.⁴⁶

Hesed means that beyond everything God was faithful, and restoration possible. Israel was to 'hope not in Israel's repentance, nor in any good work that Israel would do but in the mercy and the character of God who beyond the judgment is still there...'.⁴⁷ Hosea urges the Israelites to repentance, to 'return to God, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God' to demonstrate, in effect, loyal covenant living.⁴⁸

However, within the divine- human relationship, *hesed* was not to be limited to God. Divine *hesed* expected reciprocity and mutuality, the exercise of *hesed* in return.⁴⁹ Loyalty is used in a way which identifies that it is intended as a bi-directional term,⁵⁰ loyalty is expected of the covenant community, there is to be 'the faithful living out of the commandments on God'.⁵¹ The use of the husband and wife metaphor, with the wife in this case Israel, shows the expectation for loyalty to the husband, in this case God, although here the wife gone the opposite way.⁵² Hosea charges Israel with adultery, with 'whoring' after other gods and chapter 4 opens with a variation on the covenant lawsuit in the mosaic covenant tradition, where Hosea links the lack of *hesed* with a lack of knowledge and faithfulness.⁵³

Hear the word of the LORD O people of Israel For the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land, There is no faithfulness or loyalty and no knowledge of God in the land
Hosea 4:1

Hesed comes to feature in the statements of the moral and ethical demands that God lays upon Israel (4:1, 6:6).⁵⁴ The personal content and context of *hesed*, is however important, these demands occur within a love-based relationship.

The marriage imagery used in Hosea reveals the God's anguish in the face of their unfaithfulness,

Plead to your mother, plead, - for she is not my wife and I am not her husband- that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts.

Hosea 2:2.

Likewise the imagery used later in Hosea of the parent-child relationship highlights the same pain.

When Israel was a child I loved him And out of Egypt I brought my son The more I called them, the more they went from me, They kept sacrificing to the Baals and offering incense to idols.

Hosea 11:1⁵⁵

It is 'within this framework of God's anguish, [that] each reference to Israel's failure to show loyalty reiterates the frustration of the divine partner who has staked everything on Israel's willingness to respond, only to realize the response is not forthcoming.'⁵⁶

Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them for they have rebelled against me! I would redeem them But they speak lies against me.

Hosea 7:13. ⁵⁷

The God of Intimacy

Hosea also makes it clear that God is not satisfied with the cultic expressions of worship if these come from an empty and unfaithful heart. Yahweh looked for faithfulness, love and the knowledge of God (4:1, 6:6), rather than 'sacrifice' and 'burnt offerings'.

Hosea uses *yada* as a central concept, but while *yada* is translated knowledge the Hebrew concept is not compatible with the Greek idea of intellectual knowledge alone. Hosea condemns their absence of the knowledge of Yahweh on all levels, charging they have 'rejected knowledge' and 'forgotten the law of God' (4:6), and they have forgotten the history of God's saving acts (2:8),⁵⁸ the 'experience and recognition of God's succoring acts, which ought to lead to obedience and trust.'⁵⁹

But the Hebrew concept of knowledge moves 'beyond such informational knowledge of tradition and commandment, knowledge of God... refers to relationships'⁶⁰ and 'denotes a link between persons whose lives are closely involved one with another.'⁶¹ The Hebrew concept was founded in personal knowledge, a 'growing intimate personal knowledge of God.'⁶² Hosea in chapter 4:1, couples knowledge with covenant-love (*hesed*) and faithfulness (*emuna*), not as supplying something lacking 'but as the outward demonstration of the complete inward mutual belonging which it represents.'⁶³

Now Israel no longer remembered its history, or its relationship with God through the covenant, and the monotheistic commandments of the Decalogue that required 'thou shall have no other gods before me.' Rather Israel was stubbornly unfaithful and a vital ingredient of the covenant relationship 'conjugal fidelity'⁶⁴ was lost. Now 'although they offer choice sacrifices, though they eat flesh, the LORD does not accept them' (8:13).

Hosea does contain a litany of repentance found in 6:1-3

Come let us return to the LORD; For it is he who has torn and he will heal us; He has struck down and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; and on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his appearing is as sure as the dawn, he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.

Hosea 6:1-3.

Whether this litany represents genuine repentance on the part of the Israelites, a hypocritical offering or a sarcastic composition of Hosea himself, is debated.⁶⁵ Even if the community did sincerely wish to repent, was their knowledge and understanding of God sufficient to enable a true repentance, or was their repentance to be as syncretistic and compromised as their worship, overridden by a belief that the ritual was sufficient? The sacrifices were never meant to have intrinsic merit but were to be accompanied by 'confession of sin and humble penitence of spirit.'⁶⁶ The syncretistic expression of their religion had produced a people who thought 'in terms of discharging religious obligations through the machinery of sacrifice and offering' rather than 'of loyalty, love and acknowledging God as God.'⁶⁷

The prophets' use of the imagery of marriage means that for him the relationship of law is largely displaced by a living fellowship of love, which demands the total allegiance of man as the object of that love, and can never be satisfied with the formal fulfillment of obligation.⁶⁸

Hosea does not seek to abolish the cultic observances, the system of sacrifices and offerings, rather he seeks a return to the relationship of the covenant, to the reality and experience of a holy God and his people in a relationship of loyalty, faithfulness and the knowledge of God. He calls for 'a reformation, a rediscovery of a religion which recalls God's acts of blessing and deliverance....and then articulates the response expected from a people who have experienced the gracious acts of God.'⁶⁹

The God of Ethical Righteousness

Hosea also draws attention to his people's responsibility to behave ethically. This is not just meant to be legalistic conformity; rather, as noted before, God cares how people are treated and his relationship with his community requires behaviour consistent with that relationship.

It is widely recognized....that righteousness in the Old Testament does not refer to some abstract ethical standard. Rather righteousness has to do with living and acting in a way appropriate for a relationship.' ⁷⁰

Hosea condemns the social injustice, iniquity and lack of communal righteousness. Social structures encouraged power, greed, self-indulgence, the corruption of justice, the poor were reduced to the level of slaves, and the affluent had no sense of responsibility to the poor. ⁷¹

Swearing, lying, and murder, And stealing and adultery break out; Bloodshed follows bloodshed.
Hosea 4:2

You have plowed wickedness, You have reaped injustice, You have eaten the fruit of lies.
Hosea 10:13.

Israel's' behaviour 'distorts the moral picture of God's character that Israel is meant to portray. God is good but Israel is wicked 'and their social injustice 'perverts the moral order of a society that is meant to demonstrate a restored creation-order in its relationships.' ⁷²

For the Israelites to live and act in a way that is ethically correct requires a right relationship with God and Hosea condemns their immoral behaviour along with their unfaithfulness. Worship and justice are not separable, 'faithfulness, loyalty and knowledge of God are missing because of syncretism; and it is their absence which leads to violation of the other commandments of the Decalogue.' ⁷³ It is their spiritual adultery that is the direct cause of their moral breakdown, ⁷⁴ and their failure, in their community, to rightly image God.

The God of Judgment.

The love of God does not render his judgment null and void or a matter to be taken lightly. The judgment of God reinforces and gives meaning to the love and grace of God, the concept of *hesed* and *yada* and the requirement for ethical righteousness. His judgment shows that God takes the covenant, and the relationship it represents, seriously.

While Hosea presents a passionate picture of the love of God for Israel despite their unfaithfulness, he has an '...equally strong and passionate emphasis on the divine anger; for Hosea is outdone by hardly any other prophet in the ferocity of his threats and the savagery of his proclamations of punishment.'⁷⁵

In Hosea, Israel is referred to as a prostitute (1-3), a stubborn heifer (4:16, 10:11), a flighty dove (7:11-12), dew (13:3), and chaff (13:3).⁷⁶ They had broken the covenant and must suffer the consequences, the judgment being both immanent and just, arising from the continual breaking of the stipulations of the covenant. (12:14).⁷⁷ All the promised blessings will be taken away; Israel will be torn from her land, sent into exile, destroyed (2:1-13, 12:9), 'in Hosea's view Israel simply had no future as a nation'⁷⁸ its national, social, religious and economic life were to be reduced to nothingness.⁷⁹

A foreshadowing of the coming judgment is seen in the names Hosea is instructed to give to his children. The first called was *Jezreel*, synonymous with bloodshed, and it refers to a pleasant valley between the mountains of Samaria and Galilee linked with violence and mass murder.⁸⁰ The following children were *Lo-Ruhamah*, translated, 'without ('*lo*') compassion or mercy', the Lord will no longer have compassion on Israel, and *Lo-ammi*, translated 'not my people,' here the relationship between Israel and the Lord expressed in 'I will take you for my people and I will be your God' is reversed.⁸¹

However judgment needs to be seen in the context of the relationship of love and loyalty, the judgment is an act of love as Yahweh seeks a response from his people. The 'right conduct' that God seeks is seen in terms of 'love, faithfulness and knowledge of God, - once more the intimate processes of personal decision.' ⁸²

Love means God cannot allow the problem to continue, he '...cannot tolerate or condone sin ...because sin is defeating the purpose of love and condoning suffering...the reason for God's judgment of sin is that sin blasts and spoils those he loves.' ⁸³ For Hosea, then, sin is 'ingratitude, with its ultimate basis in an antipathy to God's very nature and will' ⁸⁴

Hosea presents a deep and rich picture of God's love and grace, but he is also called as 'a watchman, and when the time is right the watchman must sound the alarm.' ⁸⁵ The holiness of God was pictured for his people in the covenant, with its rewards and its judgments and these very judgments reveal the seriousness with which God takes his covenant and his commitment to his people.

The God of Redemption.

The covenant from the very beginning was a covenant based in redemption and Hosea reminds the people that there was still hope of redemption in God, perhaps with a heightened sensitivity that judgment and condemnation need not be the end as revealed through his enacted prophecy. Although God will judge his sinful people and send them into exile there is still the possibility of restoration. ⁸⁶

Hosea finishes with a call to repentance and a promise of restoration. However they could not overcome their own ungodliness and only by turning again to God, in true repentance, could the relationship be healed (14: 1-2.). They needed to confess their guilt (14:2) and their reliance on God alone to save them, ceasing all relationships with other gods (14:3). Only God could deal with the

problem of sin in their lives and it was only after their guilt was removed that life and blessing could be found.⁸⁷

Moreover God still keeps covenant, albeit that there will be only a remnant,⁸⁸

His [Hosea's] demand for right conduct and his knowledge that the covenant is broken by Israel's wrong conduct conflict with his knowledge that the true lover can never cease to love his loved one... Hosea knows that God's love for Israel is no less strong and his hope is that it can be more effective...all of this arises out of Hosea's knowledge that the key to God's dealings with Israel is to be found primarily in his love for Israel and only secondarily in his ethical demands. If there was no more to be said than that God demands right conduct, there would be no slightest hope for Israel.⁸⁹

The community is not requested to return with a sacrifice but with 'words,' perhaps signifying that 'this new relationship is to be a dialogue rooted in steadfast love.'⁹⁰ Israel is to find abundance of blessing in this relationship as they achieve '...their true vocation of being a holy nation in a holy place, among whom a holy God lives.'⁹¹

Illustrated by the Book of Hosea

Conclusion

For Hosea, committed and faithful keeping of the covenant, on a personal level, was integral to holiness, his is a ' unique understanding of holiness as the supreme expression of the personal life.'⁹² The holiness of God is revealed in the covenant, which Hosea places firmly in a relational context, rather than in the context of ethical righteousness. In fact, for Hosea, ethical righteousness is not possible without the relationship with and worship of Yahweh from which it proceeds. He was the first to 'perceive the unwearying love of God at work in the history of his nation'⁹³ in which he saw 'right

God-man relationship as one of a covenant of love in which everything depends on the motion of the heart and soul, and the slightest unfaithfulness, the smallest breach of trust, causes irreparable damage.' ⁹⁴

Within the covenant was contained the framework of this love-relationship and Israel, who neglected the covenant and compromised its worship had become adulterous and damaged the relationship. Hosea not only reminds them in an unequivocal manner of the nature of Yahweh, and calls them to return to and embrace their covenant relationship, he insists only God can redeem and restore the relationship and its blessings. From within this sincere and intimate relationship with God, where there was true *yada*, they would then be able to rightly image God, by reflecting his love and grace, his faithfulness and *hesed*, and his ethical righteousness, both in their relationship with God and in their relationships in community, and in this is found true holiness.

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Notes

¹ Donald L. Alexander. *The Pursuit of Godliness: Sanctification in Christological Perspective*. (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1999), 19-34. John N. Oswalt. *Called to be Holy: A Biblical Perspective*. (Nappanee, Indiana: Evangel Publishing House, 1999), 9-38. Oswalt lists 15 faulty concepts held in the understanding of reality that prevailed all around Israel and particularly in Egypt where Israel spent 400 years in slavery, denied education and the leisure of complex thinking. He further notes that the word 'holy' is not used to refer to the ethical character of the gods, and that the only group of people whose title includes the word 'holy' in the Old Testament is the pagan temple prostitutes.

² Alexander, 21.

³ W. T. Purkiser, Richard S. Taylor and Willard H. Taylor. *God, Man and Salvation. A Biblical Theology*. (Kansas City MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1977), 95. Purkiser lists those passages which reflect the covenant / treaty resemblances.

⁴ Oswalt, 27

⁵ William M. Greathouse. *Wholeness in Christ. Toward a Biblical Theology of Holiness*. (Kansas City MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998), 19. Greathouse links the ethical righteousness of God to social justice.

⁶ Greathouse, 21. How God acts is an expression of his nature.

⁷ Oswalt 29.

⁸ *ibid.*, 38.

⁹ Gordon J. Thomas. 'A holy God among a holy people in a holy place: the enduring eschatological hope.' In *'The Reader Must Understand: Eschatology in Bible and Theology.'* ed K. E. Brower and M. W. Elliott. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1997)

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 58. 'the most widely touted definition of holiness as separation (separation from the world and separation to God for sacred purposes) is clearly not a sufficiently comprehensive one.'

¹¹ Greathouse, 51.

¹² Purkiser, 96.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ John Bright. *Covenant and Promise*. (London, UK: SCM Press, 1977), 89.

¹⁵ Norman D. Snaithe, *Mercy and Sacrifice. A Study of the Book of Hosea*. (London: SCM Press, 1953), 39-40.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 40, 52. Hosea also uses the father–child imagery.

¹⁷ Raymond C. Ortlund. *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology*. (Leicester UK: Appollos, 1996), 48.

¹⁸ All quotes are from the NRSV unless otherwise indicated. See also 11:3-4.

¹⁹ Willem A. Van Gemeren. *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*. (Grand Rapids MI: Academie Books, 1990), 111.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 110.

²¹ *ibid.*, 119.

²² James Limburg Interpretation: The Book of Hosea. A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching. (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988), 15.

²³ *ibid.*, 11.

²⁴ Whether this is a real relationship is debated. See for example comments and discussion in Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 108, Interpretation 9, Ortlund, 50. H. D. Beeby, *Grace Abounding A Commentary on the Book of Hosea*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 14. Derek Kidner. *The Message of Hosea: Love to the Loveless*. (Leicester, UK: Intervarsity Press, 1981) 19. Even those who see as a real relationship dispute whether when God told Hosea to go marry a harlot it meant one who was a harlot, one who would become a harlot or one who was a temple-prostitute.

²⁵ Walter Eichrodt. *The Theology of The Old Testament. Vol 1*. (London, UK: SMC Press, 1961), 251.

²⁶ Hosea 3:1. Limburg, 13. 'cakes of raisins' are delicacies distributed at times of celebration, used here in connection with the worship of other gods.

²⁷ The children and the significance of their names will be discussed later.

²⁸ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 119.

²⁹ Thomas, 61.

³⁰ Bright, 87-88.

³¹ Thomas, 61.

³² See also: 11:1, 13:4-6.

³³ Kidner, 40.

³⁴ Limburg, 12.

³⁵ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 251.

- ³⁶ *ibid.*, 281.
- ³⁷ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 116. Quotes Berkoff.
- ³⁸ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 280-281.
- ³⁹ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 114.
- ⁴⁰ Greathouse, 21.
- ⁴¹ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 111. Greathouse, 22. Willem, A. Van Gemeren. (ed.) *New International Dictionary of Theology and Exegesis*. Vol 2. (Cumbria UK: Paternoster, 1996.) 211ff. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.
- ⁴² Van Gemeren, *Dictionary*, 212. On the human plane: *hesed* seen in friendships, family, and treaty, relationships, often paired with *emet* (truth, Hos 4:1).
- ⁴³ *ibid.*, 211. Van Gemeren suggests it is unwise to regard *hesed* as an aspect or ingredient of covenant, rather covenant reinforces the commitment to *hesed*,
- ⁴⁴ Greathouse, 22.
- ⁴⁵ Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 119.
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 132.
- ⁴⁷ Bright, 92.
- ⁴⁸ *Sakenfeld*, 119. Hosea 12:6.
- ⁴⁹ Van Gemeren, *Dictionary*, 213.
- ⁵⁰ *Sakenfeld*, 111. Hosea deliberately links it with faithfulness and knowledge.
- ⁵¹ *ibid.*, 111.
- ⁵² *ibid.*, 113.
- ⁵³ *ibid.*, 108. 4:1-3a.
- ⁵⁴ Van Gemeren, *Dictionary*, 213.
- ⁵⁵ See also Hosea 11:1-4, 7-8.
- ⁵⁶ *Sakenfeld*, 117
- ⁵⁷ See also Hosea 8:12. 6:4-6,

⁵⁸ *Sakenfeld*, 109. Snaith also notes that while this reflects the knowledge found within the political sphere of a vassal for his suzerain and vice versa, (6:3, 8:2, 13:5-6) it is not limited to this field, 'knowledge also refers to the intimacy of partnership, including sexuality, of the marriage relationship.' *Snaith*, 62.

⁵⁹ Walter Eichrodt. *The Theology of The Old Testament*. Vol 2. (London, UK: SMC Press, 1967), 292.

⁶⁰ *Sakenfeld*, 109.

⁶¹ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 2*, 292

⁶² Snaith, 62.

⁶³ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 2*, 293

⁶⁴ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 111.

⁶⁵ Sakenfeld, 105. Sakenfeld maintains that the litany does not reflect a true theological basis for return to Yahweh even if the people were sincere. For other arguments see: Beeby 70-71, Bright 92, Kidner 65, William J. Dumbrell. *The Faith of Israel. Its Expression in the Books of the Old Testament*. (Leicester, UK: Appollos, 1988), 164. and Douglas Stuart. *Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol 31. Hosea- Jonah. (Waco TX: Word, 1987), 106.

⁶⁶ Purkiser, 99.

⁶⁷ Limburg, 29.

⁶⁸ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 252.

⁶⁹ Limburg, 129-30.

⁷⁰ Sakenfeld, 119-120. Purkiser, 97.

⁷¹ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 110ff. See, for example, Hosea 11:12-12:11.

⁷² Thomas, 61.

⁷³ Sakenfeld, 10-8.

⁷⁴ Kidner, 53-54.

⁷⁵ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 281.

⁷⁶ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 111.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Bright, 91-92.

⁷⁹ Van Gemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 112. Also Snaith, 45-47. This is a repeated theme throughout Hosea see for example; 4:3, 5:1-14, 2:12, 10.

⁸⁰ Limburg, 9. Here Jehu had killed the kings of Israel and Judah, and Jezebel died. Jehu also engineered the mass extermination of Baal worshippers there.

⁸¹ *ibid*

⁸² Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 375.

⁸³ G. Campbell Morgan. *Hosea: the Heart and Holiness of God*. (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids MI: 1974), 23.

⁸⁴ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 375.

⁸⁵ Limburg, 34.

⁸⁶ Garry V. Smith. *The New NIV Application Commentary. Hosea, Amos, Micah*. (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2001), 193.

⁸⁷ Smith, 194.

⁸⁸ Beeby, 179.

⁸⁹ Snaith, 66.

⁹⁰ Beeby, 179. See also Smith, 195.

⁹¹ Thomas, 60.

⁹² Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 1*, 281.

⁹³ Eichrodt, *Theology Vol 2*, 291. Italics author's own.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 293-4

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