

## THE BOOK OF HOSEA

### Lesson 20, Chapters 11 and 12

We ended our previous lesson with verses 3 and 4 of Hosea chapter 11. In this most poetic chapter of Hosea, we have God, through the agency of His faithful Prophet Hosea, expressing both His passionate love for His set-apart people Israel, but also His heart-breaking decision to have to punish Israel for their determined idolatry and lack of faith. I want to repeat something I said to begin our study of chapter 11: we must be most careful in our assessment of these words that we not ascribe to Yehoveh God of Israel the typical spectrum of human emotion. Only humans have these particular emotions and God is not a human. However, there are but limited ways for a biblical writer to describe God's attitude and orientation towards Israel and so the regular use of human emotion vocabulary terms (like angry or sad) are used because that's all that is available to us. We could, I suppose, invent new vocabulary words that are meant to express how God uniquely thinks about things, but they would have no meaning to us if we can't identify with them. And the way we identify with those words can only be through personal experience, something we can't have since we're not God. Bottom line: take those emotions that are ascribed to God in human terms with a grain of salt and not precisely literally. In fact, in verse 9 God specifically addresses this issue when despite all the good and just reasons that He ought to simply destroy Israel, He chooses not to. He says that this is because ***"..For God am I, and not man.."***

Since this 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hosea is quite short, let's re-read it all to begin today's study.

#### **RE-READ HOSEA CHAPTER 11 all**

The first 4 verses, which we covered last time, essentially stitch together Ephraim/Israel's past sins and Yehoveh's acts of redemption towards them to more or less save them from themselves. This is the foundational understanding that all of us must have about redemption. We, too often, think of our redemption as an act of being saved *from* God. But in fact, we are being saved from ourselves; our own sinful nature necessarily results in our own self-destructive behavior. This is why a new nature is mandatory if we are to be

saved from ourselves. We essentially must become a new self not by our own will, but by God's saving will. We are given the opportunity, by God, to first recognize our sin and then second to be rescued from it. How do we recognize our sin? By knowing the Torah and the Law of Moses. This is the written document that specifically details what sin is. Then by being obedient to the terms of that document (that covenant) we can avoid sin and the destruction it brings. Even so, as human creatures we live with the uncomfortable reality that when, through Christ, we receive a new holy nature it doesn't replace the old one. Those 2 natures reside, side-by-side, within us creating a tension between them. Paul speaks of this conundrum and of the irony that he is at once most joyful for this new nature but also he is miserable because of the never-ending warfare between it and the old that continues to seek to dominate him. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit are we able to resist the destructive ways of our old nature and follow our new one... although we will stumble at times along the way.

Because Israel had forgotten the Torah and the Law of Moses, they turned to the instincts of their fallen nature and began to worship the gods of their neighbors. They truly believed they were doing a good thing. But they believed what they were doing was good *because* they didn't know the truth, and this because they didn't seek the truth. Rather they relied on their kings and their religious authorities that had fashioned a new hybridized religion, combining elements of their traditional Hebrew faith along with Baal worship. God says He had sent many Prophets to warn them of what they were doing, but the more He called to Ephraim to turn and repent, the more they went the other direction. Now Hosea is here not to beg Israel to change (as had the previous Prophets), but rather to announce that God's punishment is upon them and no amount of their repentance (at this point) would dissuade the Lord from this path because they had done it far too long. Believers pay attention. This is a God pattern that we have seen since the Garden of Eden, and will continue until there is a new heavens and earth. Jesus did not change this pattern. If we don't seek the truth, and if we don't obey it, we can sincerely believe... but believe wrongly. The truth doesn't exist in manmade doctrines or in our personal convictions... whether of the Church or the Synagogue... but rather as we find it in the Torah, the Law of Moses, and all of Holy Scripture.

Verse 5 contrasts Israel's wonderful beginnings with its dangerous and tragic current situation. I find that nearly every English Bible translation misses the mark with this verse, and it is apparent simply because the way it is most often translated is at odds with the rest of the context provided within the Book of Hosea. Most English versions have it much as the CJB has it:

**CJB Hosea 11:5** *He will not return to the land of Egypt, but Ashur will be his king, because they refused to repent.*

This translation cannot be correct because one of the underlying themes of Hosea is that God is reversing Israel's Redemption History and is, metaphorically speaking, returning them to captivity in Egypt. Rather nearly all Christian Bible editors have essentially moved the Hebrew word for "no" (which is **lo**) from its place as the very first word of this verse, to where it instead modifies the word "return". In other words, the word "no" is meant to stand alone in order to counter Ephraim's unwarranted charge against God that He engaged in smother-love against His people... He put an unbearable yoke upon them in the form of the Law of Moses in order to control them. So, a better rendering is that found in the NJPS version of the verse. ***NO!! They return to Egypt, and Assyria is their king, because they refused to repent.*** This returns proper alignment of the meaning to the overall context of Hosea, and it restores the original Hebrew word order. God's verdict against Ephraim is that He is returning them to Egypt (again, this is a metaphor for captivity and oppression), and this new captivity will be at the hand of the king of Assyria. Why is this happening? Israel refused to repent. What would that repentance have consisted of? Returning to the Law of Moses and shunning all other manmade rules and religions. Returning to a slightly better, slightly less pagan, religion that still consisted of mixing doctrines and traditions with Scriptural truth was not enough. Besides, that option of repentance was a thing of the past. The door to their redemption had been slammed shut... at least for a very long time. God's overriding love has its limits and at times He must take severe action.

Verse 6 provides us with yet another problematic interpretation. As we have read in the CJB, this verse is more usually translated as being about Assyria descending on Israel with swords (in other words, their military attacking) and in so doing they attack Israel's cities, tear down the gates of their walled cities, and

overwhelm Israel because of Israel's foolish political policies of making alliances with gentile nations. However, an equally good argument can be made for translating verse 6 this way:

***A sword shall descend upon their skins, and consume their limbs, and devour their bones.***

The idea is of a siege upon Israel's cities that results in starvation of their citizens, which results in them eating strips of their own skin. I could make a case for either interpretation so I'm not going to ask you to prefer one over the other. The point we can take from either of these interpretations is that far from the alliances of peace that Israel is madly dashing about hoping to construct to avoid being conquered, what is going to happen is that they are going to be invaded by Assyria and suffer all the horrific deprivations that result from the siege warfare that was common to that era.

Verse 7 allows me to detour just momentarily to instruct you about something that is quite relevant to our understanding of this section of Hosea. In Hebrew Synagogue Tradition, the Torah is divided into 50 portions (called **Parashot**). These portions are read, in order, at Jewish Synagogues during an annual 50-week cycle. Every Synagogue in the world is reading the same portion on the same week and day. Part of each **Parasha** is what is called the **Haftarah**. It is additional scriptural reading that includes words from the Prophets. What most Jews don't know is that while among all the Jewish sects there is unanimous agreement on the order and week of the year in which each **Parasha** is read, that isn't necessarily so with the **Haftarah** reading that is part of it. In the Sephardic tradition, Hosea 11:7 through Hosea 12:12 is read on the Torah portion called **vayyese**. In the Ashkenazic tradition, it is read as part of the following week's Torah portion. But the thing that we need to understand is that the Hebrews of yesteryear that ordered the portions all recognized that Hosea 11:7 through 12:12 forms a cohesive unit of thought. That is, it can be set apart as a group of verses and understood as projecting a common underlying theme. Therefore, it means that to properly interpret each verse within that unit then each must be taken within the overall context of the whole. And the whole is Hosea 11:7 through 12:12. It is with that underlying understanding that we will study the

next several verses of Hosea, which crosses over into even the next chapter of Hosea... Hosea chapter 12.

Of the many difficult verses in Hosea chapter 11, verse 7 might be the most challenging. In fact, most ancient Hebrew language scholars admit that the words used are so obscure, and probably are meant mostly as expressions of that era the meaning of which we have no good idea, that whatever interpretation we decide upon we need to hold very lightly. Rather, then, than explaining the many literary difficulties and the consequent possibilities, I think we can boil it down to 2 directions that this verse can take. The first direction can be paraphrased in this way: ***Then My people will tire of turning away from Me; and on the Most High they will call; all together they will surely exalt Him.***

The second direction can be paraphrased this way: ***For My people persists in its defection from Me. When it (Israel) is summoned upward it (Israel) does not rise at all.***

So, the first direction is that this verse represents a transition of sorts from Israel's determined apostasy to a future time when, after a long period of exile as punishment, God will renew His covenant with them and take them back into His fold. In the context of Hosea, it means that Israel will finally tire of trying to do things their way, shuck off their hybridized religion, and return to the God of Israel and the pure ways of the Law of Moses.

The second direction simply amplifies the reasoning behind God's choice of severe chastisement for Israel. They won't stop their sinning, which amounts to their defection from their allegiance to (their covenant with) Yehoveh. God summons Ephraim/Israel upward (towards heaven, towards righteousness, through the message of His Prophets), but Israel (as a whole) refuses to obey the summons. There is no thought included that speaks of a future reconciliation. Which of these 2 options is correct I cannot say with enough assurance to recommend one over the other.

Verse 8 is at once the most poetic in the entire Book of Hosea, and also probably the most shocking. God has made known Israel's guilt, what their crimes against Him deserve, and what He intends to do to them. Here in verse 8, however, is a

sudden shift to hope, but only following the full measure of Israel's punishment. The fact that there is an "after" means that Ephraim/Israel will not bear full and final destruction as they ought to, and as has been threatened. Remembering what I said to begin today's study... that we must not take some of these words of human emotion and apply them literally to God... so, figurately speaking, what we are reading is God having an inner struggle within Himself in determining what Israel's bad behavior means He ought to do to them versus what His love for Israel prevents Him from doing.

What we have here is precisely what was predicted and set down in the Torah in the Book of Deuteronomy hundreds of years before Hosea's time.

**CJB Deuteronomy 4:25-31** <sup>25</sup> *"When you have had children and grandchildren, lived a long time in the land, become corrupt and made a carved image, a representation of something, and thus done what is evil in the sight of ADONAI your God and provoked him;* <sup>26</sup> *I call on the sky and the earth to witness against you today that you will quickly disappear from the land that you are crossing the Yarden to possess. You will not prolong your days there but will be completely destroyed.* <sup>27</sup> *ADONAI will scatter you among the peoples; and among the nations to which ADONAI will lead you away, you will be left few in number.* <sup>28</sup> *There you will serve gods which are the product of human hands, made of wood and stone, which can't see, hear, eat or smell.* <sup>29</sup> *However, from there you will seek ADONAI your God; and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and being.* <sup>30</sup> *In your distress, when all these things have come upon you, in the acharit-hayamim, you will return to ADONAI your God and listen to what he says;* <sup>31</sup> *for ADONAI your God is a merciful God. He will not fail you, destroy you, or forget the covenant with your ancestors which he swore to them.*

What we have been seeing demonstrated (by going back and examining the Torah) is that God is not impulsive, frivolous, nor does He make it up as He goes. Over time He lays down principles... never revoking any... and then follows those principles, Himself, *because* those principles define His very nature. Thus, when we read in the Scriptures about how our future in this modern world is going to play out, as we approach and enter into the End Times, we can know from the perfection of how God has laid down these principles and followed them in the past that it will happen again the same way. If there are 2 principles that we

simply must take to heart that are given to us in the Book of Hosea they are: first, repent now because at some unknown point that opportunity will have permanently passed. And second, prepare, prepare, prepare. Real, tangible, practical preparedness. Over and over God pled with those who worship Him to prepare for what was on the horizon and was headed towards them at breakneck speed. Only a precious few paid heed. Believers, again I caution you: prepare. Your faith will save your eternal soul, but that alone won't shelter you from disaster in this life. Prepare your hearts, and prepare your pantries. Prepare for when you will have no one to trust for your and your family's safety and well-being but yourselves. Israel took the continual chaos they had descended into in stride because they became used to it as it evolved into the new normal. They grew deaf to God's call through His Prophets to repent and prepare because they'd grown numb to it. Don't put yourself or your family in that same position. And, men, this responsibility falls directly upon you... not on your wives, and not on your children, and certainly not on your local government agencies or charities. I don't know how much time you have... we all have; but the supersonic rate at which the world operates today, and the drastic changes that happen in hours, ought to be apparent if you've been living on this planet in recent times. Prayer is a good place start; but it ought to be a short one. Preparation is not rocket science; experts aren't required. It is also not the exercise of religion. It is awareness, common sense and diligence. Actively and purposely make a plan, and start carrying it out... NOW!

Yehoveh determined that Ephraim/Israel had come to its end as a nation that had resided for centuries in the Promised Land. But, that was not to be the end of God's people. As I have established in earlier lessons, according to the Torah a father that has been treated in such a way as Israel has treated their Father (Yehoveh) is entitled to execute that child. But this Holy Father has decided instead to apply amnesty to His rebellious child. This is expressed with a series of rhetorical questions, followed by a concrete answer. How, God asks Himself, is He to give up on His beloved Ephraim/Israel? How can He surrender Israel to destruction? How can He do to them what He did to **Admah** and **Zeboiim**? **Admah** and **Zeboiim** were obliterated by God along with Sodom and Gomorrah; that is, they suffered total and final destruction. Bottom line: God just can't bring Himself to do to Ephraim/Israel what their behavior indicates He should. As is stated to close out this verse, the reason He is making this choice is that 1) He

had a change of heart and 2) instead of wrathful anger He had a feeling of empathy towards Israel. The Lord always wants to win back those of His who have gone astray, as much as it is up to Him. But in the end, it is the human will that decides if that is possible.

Verse 9 continues the same theme as verse 8. Yehoveh is well within His rights to exterminate Israel; in fact, this right was called out and predicted in the Torah. However, He won't do this. He won't lay upon Ephraim/Israel the full weight of His wrath that if done, would annihilate the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom and they would never exist in any form again. Rather, because of His grace, He will (at some future point) restore Israel. Note to those Christians who think that grace was a New Testament innovation. Grace has always been part of God's character. Nothing could describe grace better than the Lord deciding in His mercy not to give Israel what they rightly deserved. But even more, they will do nothing to earn that mercy... otherwise it wouldn't be grace. Why is Yehoveh doing this? Well, first and foremost (says verse 9), He isn't one of them. He is not an Israelite. He isn't a human being. A human being would, in the same situation, make a different choice because our emotions are arbitrary and we can seek revenge as a form of justice. But, says Yehoveh, He is God and so He is able to set aside His anger in favor of amnesty.

When we read that God says He is the Holy One among you, the word for holy is ***kodesh***. It means set-apart; something unique and different than all the rest. When we call God holy, we are saying that He is one of one; He isn't one of us. Didn't Israel already understand that? No. Because in the pagan thinking they had adopted, in the Baal god systems, the gods mostly were humans much like the pagans that worshipped them. The gods were more or less one of the people they lorded over... just better and more powerful. So, Israel wasn't to think of Yehoveh as one of them, only better. God was (and is) a whole other being and so He processes information and makes His decisions quite differently than the way human beings do. In fact, one of things that the Bible teaches us (Old and New Testaments) is that if we truly want to emulate God we must curb our tendency towards anger. This begins with the determination not to abuse other human beings. Rather, for those who want to be most God-like, it is abounding love that ought to be demonstrated. Do not take this to validate the Christian mantra that God has only one attribute: love (which is wrong on every level). But,



He makes His decisions based on love and not on anger (even though He gets angry). If I may, I'd like to take this opportunity to address another attribute of God that belongs to God alone. In 1Samuel we read this:

**CJB 1 Samuel 15:28-29** ***<sup>28</sup> Sh'mu'el said to him, "ADONAI has torn the kingdom of Isra'el away from you today and given it to a fellow countryman of yours who is better than you. <sup>29</sup> Moreover, the Eternal One of Isra'el will not lie or change his mind, because he isn't a mere human being subject to changing his mind."***

So, God didn't change His mind by first deciding to destroy Israel and later deciding not to. If anything, this series of passages is meant to show just how different from humans God is. The good news for Israel is that they will have a future despite all this about to happen to them. What they don't know, of course, is that it will be more than a hundred generations before this future restoration begins to take shape.

Verse 10 explains at a far view just how this restoration will take place. Metaphorically speaking, Yehoveh will roar like a lion and the 10 tribes of the North will respond to His call. When He calls, the 10 tribes will hurry to come home from the West. For Israel the West is the Mediterranean Sea (and beyond). God Himself will be the one that announces their return. A very similar thought for this return is spoken by the Prophet Isaiah.

**CJB Isaiah 27:13** ***On that day a great shofar will sound. Those lost in the land of Ashur will come, also those scattered through the land of Egypt; and they will worship ADONAI on the holy mountain in Yerushalayim.***

The Hosea and Isaiah passages are speaking of the same event, just using different metaphors; in Hosea it's the roar of a lion, and in Isaiah the sound of a shofar. This is a good reminder that we mustn't take these metaphors and analogies as literal. I personally doubt we'll hear the ominous roar of a lion or the shrill sound of a shofar coming from Heaven. Rather, whatever that call to Israel to come home is like, I think it is happening right now as evidenced by many from the 10 Lost Tribes having returned to Israel and more on their way. I suspect it is more a strong and irresistible inner calling to come and to be an obedient

servant to Yehoveh than it is some kind of external alarm... but I can't be certain of that.

And verse 11 makes it clear that the call to come home will indeed be home to the land that Israel left. Flying away like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from Assyria are once again metaphors. Of course, it is quite striking that the nearly exclusive method that the 10 Lost Tribes are returning home, today, is by flying on an airplane. And we must be aware that the flying like a bird from Egypt is meant not as a location (Egypt) but rather as a symbol of returning from captivity. But, "from Assyria" is meant as a geographic location. Now that we know the geographic locations of most of the descendants of the 10 tribes (at least those who retained a tribal identity), then we must also understand that while the Assyrian Empire no longer exists, indeed those former nations of the Empire are from where many of the exiled tribes have been found and are returning home. I think important for our purposes today, is that this prophesied return of the Northern Kingdom is finally underway. And it signals that an entire new chapter of world history, and of Redemption History, has begun. According to the Bible, what comes next is rapidly increasing tribulations and terrors around the globe (all of them at the hands of evil men), and an exponential increase in wickedness among pagans and also increased apostasy among God's worshippers. Decide for yourself if that is what you are witnessing in this the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Let's move on to Hosea chapter 12.

### **READ HOSEA CHAPTER 12 all**

Please be aware that in some Bibles what appears as the first verse of chapter 12 is placed as the final (the 12<sup>th</sup> verse) of chapter 11. It doesn't alter anything about the meaning. All chapter markings are insertions made around 1000 years ago, are rather arbitrary, and were never in the original biblical texts. As with chapter 11, chapter 12 is full of difficulties and challenges and the opening verse is no exception. Let's remember that the Torah portion Haftarah uses Hosea 11:7 through Hosea 12:12 as a coherent literary unit that embodies a common context. So, as we move from chapter 11 to 12, we need to keep this close relationship between the ending of chapter 11 and most of chapter 12 as we determine how to extract meaning.

The opening words are pretty straightforward. The indictment against Israel is described as treachery and deceit. What gets quite interesting is the second half of the verse. The traditional way of understanding this among Christian academia is as we read it in the CJB. It says that Judah still rules with God and is faithful with holy ones. Although exactly what that means is not particularly clear. The Hebrew view on this passage has been historically quite different. Here is the Jewish Publication Society interpretation that fairly well reflects the more typical Hebrew take on this verse.

<sup>JPS</sup> **Hosea 11:12b** *...and Judah is yet wayward towards God, and towards the Holy One who is faithful.*

This is a rather substantial (if not opposite) understanding of Judah's condition from the Christian interpretation. In the Christian view, Judah is depicted as faithful, as are the holy ones (probably meaning the righteous among the Judeans). In the Hebrew view Judah is NOT faithful but the Holy One (God) is. However, even before that is the issue of whether the word Judah belongs here. The Book of Hosea is about Ephraim/Israel (the Northern Kingdom), not about Judah (the Southern Kingdom). Although we've dealt with this before I'll briefly address it again. There are a couple of aspects to consider. There's about a dozen or so insertions of the word Judah in the Book of Hosea, and many of the modern scholars who study ancient biblical Hebrew (not the current Hebrew dialects), insist that these mentions of Judah were glosses added by later Jewish editors, probably not long after the 10 Tribes were exiled by Assyria, in order to warn Judeans that if they don't straighten up and fly right this same scenario that happened to their Israelite brothers could also happen to them. But a second possibility is also at least as likely; there was a misunderstanding of an abbreviation used in the 8<sup>th</sup> century that led later Hebrew Bible scholars to think it meant Judah.

The abbreviation I'm speaking of concerns the Hebrew letter **yod**. **Yod** (expressed as Y in the English alphabet) is the first letter of the Hebrew word **Y'srael** and it is also the first letter of the Hebrew word **Y'hudah**. It is more and more agreed among Semitic language scholars that in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. it became practice in the North of the Promised Land to abbreviate the word **Y'srael**

by using only a **yod**. This practice was likely NOT used in the South. However, since the **yod** is also the first letter of the word **Y'hudah**, then later after Ephraim/Israel's exile some Jewish (Judean) Bible scholars misunderstood and thought that the **yod** was an abbreviation NOT for Israel but rather for Judah. I'm not sure which scenario best accounts for the insertion of the word Judah, here, but either way it doesn't seem to belong. I'll cut to the chase rather than continue with the technical language aspects. I'm going to give you a translation of verse 1 that may seem odd at first, but as we continue through more verses of Hosea chapter 12 it begins to become more plausible. This is the way Mayer Gruber has worded it:

***And Israel is devoted with respect to El, and with respect to angels is loyal.***

For even some of you advanced students that are following along, this may seem strange as it is so at odds with the traditional translations. But, with some further explanation I think I can build a case for it. I'll preview it by saying this: what I think we have here is Hosea reprimanding Israel for their worship of an angel that is called Bethel and also the Angel of Bethel and one time is even simply called El. It is known in Jewish history that angel worship became an issue in ancient times for Israel, although in exactly what ways is less clear. When we read in the Old Testament of the fearsome appearance of some angels and the things they could do, it shouldn't be all that much of a reach for us to understand how some of primitive Israel could have overreacted and given a divine status to angels such that they actually went so far as to worship them. Listen to this interesting exchange between Jacob and this Angel of Bethel as we find it in Genesis 31.

**CJB Genesis 31:10-13** ***<sup>10</sup> Once, when the animals were mating, I had a dream: I looked up and there in front of me the male goats which mated with the females were streaked, speckled and mottled. <sup>11</sup> Then, in the dream, the angel of God said to me, 'Ya'akov!' and I replied, 'Here I am.' <sup>12</sup> He continued, 'Raise your eyes now, and look: all the male goats mating with the females are streaked, speckled and mottled; for I have seen everything Lavan has been doing to you. <sup>13</sup> I am the God of Beit-El, where you anointed a standing-stone with oil, where you vowed your vow to me. Now get up, get out of this land, and return to the land where you were born.'"***

Notice how Jacob says that in his dream an angel of God spoke to him. And then this angel of God says to Jacob "I am the God of Bethel". Very strange. So, is this an angel (as we think of an angel), or is this God? Now listen to this verse from the Prophet Jeremiah.

**CJB Jeremiah 48:13** ***13 Mo'av will be disappointed by K'mosh then, just as the house of Isra'el was disappointed by Beit-El, a god in whom they had put their trust.***

Just to be clear: this verse says that the nation of Moab will be disappointed by their worship of **Chemosh** (their national god, which of course is no god at all), just as the house of Israel was disappointed by a god named Bethel in whom they had put their trust. To "put their trust" meant that Israel showed devotion in the form of worship of this god named Bethel. In the Genesis 31 passage, the Hebrew says that the angel that spoke to Jacob said that he was the El of Beit-El. The word found in this same passage for angel is **malach** (the standard Hebrew word for angel, but that literally means messenger). So, in the case of Genesis 31, the words **malach** and El become virtually synonymous. El is most typically translated in English to God, and that isn't necessarily wrong except that as with so many languages (Hebrew included), words within a language can assume different meanings over long passages of time. Words can also have double meanings that the context they are presented in has to explain its use. And words can be used as expressions that don't necessarily mean what they literally say word-for-word.

So, since Bethel is a place name, but it also is the name of an angel, and this angel is also called El, it opens up all sorts of fascinating questions and since in Hosea chapter 12 there is much reference to the Patriarch Jacob and his personal history, it seems logical that this opening verse of chapter 12 is probably also connected with the person of Jacob and events that happened in his life.

One other consideration before we move on to verse 2. This interesting connection with Jacob and the strange wording of verse 1 has caused some modern Christian scholars to wonder if the events of Jacob's life in Genesis influenced the Book of Hosea, or did the Book of Hosea in this chapter

(concerning Jacob) influence the writer of Genesis? On its face I cannot accept that the much later Book of Hosea influenced the writer of Genesis, but many modern Christian scholars have tried to show that Genesis was written after the Babylonian Exile of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and so they would prefer it if Hosea influenced Genesis. I will say unequivocally that the concept that the Torah was written after the Babylonian Exile is nonsense of the highest order, so of course my position is that Hosea well knew the Book of Genesis and the ancient stories (ancient even to Hosea) about Jacob and some of his strange encounters with angels (such as the one that he wrestled with and dislocated Jacob's hip to end the fracas). The interaction of angels with humans was significant especially in earlier parts of the Bible era, and very likely these early Hebrews had to work it out for themselves as to exactly who these creatures were and what their relationship was with God and their place in the Heavenly order.

So, to sum it up, verse 1 may be speaking about the veneration that the people of Ephraim/Israel had for an angel that either appeared at Bethel or was named Bethel or both things were true. They worshipped this angel as though he was God, and this got them into trouble with Yehoveh.

We'll open up with verse 2 next time.