

THE USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE BOOK OF HOSEA

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Introduction

In recent years there has been an avalanche of studies which have analyzed the way the New Testament writers cited and interpreted the Old Testament.¹ This research has been augmented significantly by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, where the sectarian authors at Qumran cited OT texts believing they were experiencing the fulfillment of prophetic texts in contemporary events. The methods employed by NT writers and other Jewish groups in interpreting and quoting the OT perhaps cannot be fully appreciated and understood apart from earlier practices. As M. Fishbane has shown in his work *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*,² the practice of citing earlier canonical texts may be observed in the OT itself. Fishbane has provided a comprehensive survey of the possible ways the OT texts may have used earlier traditions. This area of investigation has bearing not only for the history and technique of exegetical methods used by the NT writers and other Jewish interpreters, but also has implications pertinent to the acceptance of biblical books as canonical

1 E.g., see WC. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985) 1; I. H. Marshall, "An Assessment of Recent Developments," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture, Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, SSF; eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 1-2 and R. B. Sloan, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament" in *Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle*, ed. G. L. Klein (Nashville: Broadman, 1992) 129-59.

2 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Scripture.³ In this essay Hosea's use of earlier OT texts will be analyzed. The arrangement for the textual examination will proceed along the canonical order of the texts used in Hosea. The analysis will begin with the narrative texts used in Hosea and then analyze Hosea's use of legal passages.⁴

Hosea's Use of Old Testament Narrative Texts

It has long been recognized that the prophet Hosea was very familiar with the earlier narrative writings of the OT. Indeed, Hosea is considered by many as the most historical of all the OT writing prophets due to acquaintance with previously written narrative texts.⁵

Primeval History

Although the creation account from Genesis is not frequently discussed in prophetic literature (in comparison, say, to the Exodus), we do find in Hos 2:18 [MT=20] an apparent dependence on the creation account of Genesis 1. In Hos 2:18 [20] we read: "In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground." The animals listed in this verse occur in the same order as in Gen 1:30, a text concerned with providing sustenance for the animals. Supplying animals with food is also what is under consideration in Hos 2:18-[20]. The reference to the animals from Gen 1:30 in the restoration passage of Hos 2:18 [20] is thus a re-creation accomplished by God under the provisions He promised to Israel in the new covenant.⁶ The reference to the series of animals in Hos 2:18 [20], following the creation order, is a return to the harmony that existed in creation as the animal kingdom is to be maintained.⁷

³ W C. Kaiser, Jr., "Inner Biblical Exegesis-as a Model for Bridging the 'Then' and 'Now' Gap: Hos 12:1-6," *JETS* 28 (March 1985) 34; and L. M. Eslinger, "Hosea 12:5a and Genesis 32:29: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," *JSOT* 18 (1980) 91.

⁴ This is not to deny that Hosea was familiar with other portions of the OT. Kaufmann, for example, contends that Hosea alludes to specific texts in OT Wisdom Literature. See Y. Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel* 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1956) 3. 112-113, 122 (in Hebrew).

⁵ Kaufmann, *History*, 122-23. Similarly, S. McKenzie, "Exodus Typology in Hosea," *Res Q* 22 (1979) 100; and D. R Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History* (BZAW 191; Berlin. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990) 11.

⁶ Wolff states that this text is the first reference to the concept of the new covenant. H. W Wolff, *Hosea* (Hermeneia: Fortress, 1974) 51. He also states that the text recalls Gen 1:30. *Ibid.*

⁷ See L E. McComiskey, "Hosea," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. L E. McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 47. Another

An additional reference to the animals found in the creation account in Gen 1:30 occurs in Hos 4:3. In this passage, in response to various covenant violations by the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom, the Israelites are described as being in a state of despondency. These sins affect not only the human inhabitants of the nation, but also have an effect on the animal world. We are told the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky waste away as a consequence of Israel's unfaithfulness, while the fish of the sea disappear.⁸ The fact of the animals' destruction is further emphasized in the presentation of the animals in a chiasmic arrangement when compared with the order of Gen 1:20-24. These animals from the three spheres of land, sky, and sea represent the entire animal kingdom. Hosea's chiasmic arrangement suggests that the creation order is being undone or perhaps subject to reversion due to the enormity of Israel's sin.⁹ We thus find a reversal of the harmony God will establish in the restoration in Hos 2:18 [20].

Yet this is not the only occasion Hosea indicates that he was familiar with the narrative content of the Book of Genesis. The next texts we will examine from Genesis are from the Patriarchal Narratives.

Patriarchal Narratives

In an announcement regarding the future restoration of Israel, Hosea states that the quantity of the reinstated nation is comparable to the sand on the seashore: "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore," *מִסְפַּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם הַיָּם* (mispar bene yisra'el keh_ul hayyam Hos 1:10 [MT=2:1]). The language and the comparison represent a dependency on God's promise to Abraham in Gen 15:5 and 22:17.¹⁰ The expression provides a clear example of the borrowing of a prominent phrase drawn from the promise to the nation via the Patriarch which is now applied to the future reinstalling of Israel. Hosea is also familiar with other passages from the patriarchal narratives. The next

reference to the early chapters of Genesis may occur in Hos 10:8 where in judgment upon the high places of Aven "thorns and thistles" will grow. This is possibly an allusion to the specific effects of sin mentioned in the curse in Gen 3:18. McComiskey, "Hosea", and R. C. Chisholm, Jr., *Interpreting the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan) 41.

⁸ Because the fish are also destroyed, Ehrlich maintains that this judgment is more severe than the judgment the world experienced in the global flood when only land creatures were destroyed. A. B. Ehrlich, *Mikra Ki-Peshuto* 3 vols. (New York: KTAV; 1969) 3. 367 (in Hebrew).

⁹ M. Deroche, "The Reversal of Creation in Hosea," *VT* 31 (1981) 403.

¹⁰ See E. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 202; and C. H. Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody, 1986) 99.

¹¹ The new covenant blessing is harmonious with the Abrahamic promise as Paul notes in Galatians 3.

discussion moves from the citing of a phrase in the Patriarchal narrative to an allusion to a larger narrative context, Gen 25:11-35:22.

In Hosea 12 the prophet discusses disobedience and the threat of divine punishment for the Northern Kingdom. To illustrate the nation's propensity to rebel against God, Hosea suggests that Israel's obstinacy is characteristic behavior. Even Jacob, their forefather, displayed unfaithfulness. In Hos 12:2-4, 12 [MT=3-5, 13] we read:

The Lord has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds. (v 2)

In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God. (v 3)

He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there. (v 4)

Jacob fled to the country of Aram; Israel served to get a wife; and to pay for her he tended sheep. (v 12)

There is good reason to suggest that these verses from Hosea 12 are dependent on the earlier narrative account recorded in Gen 25:11-35:22. Hos 12:3a mentions that Jacob grasped his brother by the heel. The source for this information is surely recorded in Gen 25:21-26, particularly Gen 25:26 where Jacob is described as holding onto the heel of Esau as he comes from Rebekah's womb.¹²

The next half of v 3 mentions another defining event of Jacob's life, the account of Jacob wrestling with God (recorded in Gen 32:22-32). In 12:4 [MT=5] we discover with interest the comment that the being with whom Jacob wrestled was in fact an angel. Kaiser comments on the explanation:

Now even though Genesis 32 does not mention an "angel" but simply refers to a "person" (32:25) who in v 29 is identified as Elohim, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity in this text. In fact the glossing of God with "angel" eliminated the offensive anthropomorphism that would otherwise portray the incorporeal God of the universe wrestling in hand combat with a mere mortal like Jacob.¹³

Regardless, the occurrence of the key verb "prevailed" (יָכַל, *yukal* 12:4 [MT=5]) borrowed from Gen. 32:29 renders Hosea's dependency on this Genesis narrative indisputable.¹⁴

The reference to Jacob's weeping and begging favor in Hos 12:4 [5] is not as easy to pinpoint in the narrative account of Jacob's life found in Genesis. Yet the clear allusion to the narrative of Genesis in the pre-

¹² Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation*, 42-43.

¹³ Kaiser, "Inner Biblical Exegesis," 39-40.

¹⁴ Andersen and Freedman maintain that the use of this verb in the two passages is the strongest verbal link between the two texts. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 608.

vious phrases causes us to suspect that the Genesis narrative is the source for this more problematic phrase.¹⁵ It has been suggested that the cause is to be found in the occurrence of the two Hebrew roots בכה (bkh) and הג (hg) in Genesis 33. That chapter records Jacob's meeting with Esau and the occurrence of the same two Hebrew roots found in Hosea 12. This explanation has been advocated by Holladay, McKenzie, and Kaiser.¹⁶ Eslinger nicely summarizes the point of Hosea's reference to the Jacob account:

In 12:3, Hosea makes formal announcement of Yahweh's dispute with contemporary Israel. This formal dispute was Hosea's way of engaging Israel in a confrontation with Yahweh, just as long before the messenger had struggled with Jacob and prevailed. . . . Just as Jacob had wept and supplicated to Esau (Hos 12:5ab, Gen 33:4, 10) after submitting to God and the *malak*, so Hosea suggests, Israel should do likewise.¹⁷

The analogy is meaningful only if we assume that the character of the nation was consistent with the behavior of its ancestry.¹⁸ The audience would be reminded of the Patriarch's "character defect"¹⁹ which they inherited and which they now unmistakably exhibit. We now move from discussion of Hosea's use of narrative from the Book of Genesis to other narratives from the Torah, specifically the narratives recording the Exodus and wanderings from the Books of Exodus and Numbers.

Exodus-Wanderings Narrative

The records of the Exodus from Egypt and the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert were clearly accounts known to Hosea as evidenced by his frequent reference to these salient events.

In the first chapter of Hosea, where God directs the prophet to marry a wife of harlotry (1:2), the children born to the union are given names which forecast the impending punishment which God is about

¹⁵ Thus reasons McKenzie. See S. L. McKenzie, "The Jacob Tradition in Hosea xii 4-5," *VT* 36 (1986) 314-16. For the amazing number of verbal correlations between Hosea 12 and the Genesis account, see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 378.

¹⁶ W. L. Holladay, "Chiasmus, The Key to Hosea XII 3-6," *VT* 16 (1956) 56; S. L. McKenzie, "The Jacob Tradition in Hosea xii 4-5," *VT* 36 (1986) 314-16; and Kaiser, "Inner Biblical Exegesis," 40. See Kaiser's helpful charts on 40-41 for a comparison of the Hosea and Genesis accounts.

¹⁷ Eslinger, "Hosea 12:5a and Genesis 32:29," 94-95.

¹⁸ D. Kimchi, *Miqra'ot Gedalot*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1976) 4. 300a (in Hebrew); Kaiser, "Inner Biblical Exegesis," 44-45; McKenzie, "The Jacob Tradition," 317; and Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation* 376-377, 422-23, 426.

¹⁹ Holladay, "Chiasmus," 63.

to bring upon the nation. God tells the prophet the reason he is to name the third child Lo-Ammi is because "you are not my people, and I am not your god," **וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם** (*we'anoki lo' 'ehyeh*, 1:9). The statement is clearly a reversal of God's declaration of what was to commence in a special way at the Exodus: "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God," **וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים** (*wehayiti lakem le'lohim*, Exod 6:7).²⁰ More precisely, the last phrase in Hos 1:9, **לֹא אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם**, "I am not your people," is a wordplay²¹ on Exod 3:14 where God discloses his name to Moses in commissioning Moses to be his emissary before Pharaoh. The negation of the phrase in Hosea indicates that Israel's special relationship with God has been abrogated. Stuart explains the Hosean reference in light of Exod 3:14:

Yahweh himself refers here to the first person form of the name, harking back to the ancient original use of the first person from Exod 3:14. Why? Because the first person form was that associated with the tradition of initiation of the covenant. Yahweh was withdrawing the very covenant he so dramatically initiated via the revelation of his name and is using the same form of the name he used to Moses.²²

The meaning of the name implied that upon his deliverance of the Israelites at the Exodus God would henceforth preside with the Israelites. Hosea's negating of the name, however, indicated that the Israelites' rebellion against God will bring this special relationship to an end. Sanchez-Centina illustrates the significance of the phrase in his translation: "I am not I-AM for you."²³

Explicit references to the Exodus deliverance include Hos 2:15, (MT=17); 12:9, (MT=10), 13, (MT=14); 13:4; and possibly 11:1.²⁴ Passages such as Hos 12:9 and 13:4 include the phrase "I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt" and thus clearly allude to the Exodus. Other passages such as Hos 8:13; 9:3; and 11:5 assume the Exodus or at least Israel's enslavement in Egypt as these passages threaten a re-

²⁰ The statement expresses the essence of the covenant relationship. G. Von Hans-Jurgen Zobel, "Hosea und das Deuteronomium," *TLZ* 110 (1985) 16.

²¹ Andersen-Freedman, *Hosea*, 197-99; F: C. Fensham, "The Marriage Metaphor in Hosea," *JNSL* 12 (1984) 76.

²² D Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Waco: Word, 1987) 33. Hartom and Cassuto also recognize that many maintain this formula in Hosea to be a reference to the account of Exodus 3. A S. Hartom and M D Cassuto, "Minor Prophets," in *Torah, Prophets, Writing* (Jerusalem: Yavneh Publishing House, 1973) 10 (in Hebrew).

²³ E. Sanchez-Centina, "Hermeneutics and Context: The Exodus," in *Conflict and Context: Hermeneutics in the Americas*, eds. M. L. Branson and C. R Padilla (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 170. Similarly, Bullock, *Prophetic Books*, 99.

²⁴ See McKenzie, "Exodus Typology," 100-108.

turn to Egypt.²⁵ Hoffman has noted well the significance of the abundant reference to the Exodus-wanderings theme in the Book of Hosea in reference to the hope motif in Hos 2:14-15 [MT=16-17]:

The new eternal covenant (ii 14-15), which is depicted using some eschatological motifs, is believed to begin with a renewal of the exodus events; the wandering in the desert and the possession of the good land "like the days of her youth and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (ii 15) are preconditions for the renewal of the covenant between God and his people. Hosea considered the historical exodus a constitutive event upon which the covenant was established in the past, and without which no future renewal of the covenant, after it has been nullified by the people, is possible. Thus the exodus is considered here a typological event, rather than a mere unique historical one.²⁶

The numerous references to the Exodus in the Book of Hosea indicate that for Israel to be God's people again and for Yahweh to become "God-for-them" (Exod 3:14) a new exodus would have to take place. The nation, on the other hand, would have to "go back to the wilderness, to reject Baal and all divine-political powers (Israel's lovers), and commit itself once more to Yahweh."²⁷

An additional reference to the period of wilderness wanderings in Hosea occurs in the reference to the Israelites "devoting themselves to shame" at Baal-Peor (Hos 9:10 from Num 25:1-5). The shameful actions of the nation on that occasion involved fornication with the Moabite women which led to idolatry. This act of infidelity is to be contrasted with God's gracious action toward the Israelites (Hos 9:10) in sovereignly choosing them for himself. As in the case in the wilderness they now have an obligation to covenant faithfulness in response to God's gracious work on the nation's behalf.²⁸ And yet, then as now, they, like their ancestors before them, are failing to uphold and honor the covenant commands. Stuart comments on the significance of Hosea's use of the Baal-Peor reference in Hosea 9: "The Baal-Peor incident represented a rejection of Yahwism in favor of idolatrous Baal worship, accompanied by marriage infidelity, in defiance of the Sinai covenant. This automatically broke the covenant with Yahweh (Exod 23:32-33;

²⁵ See Y. Hoffman, "A North Israelite Typological Myth and a Judean Historical Tradition: The Exodus in Hosea and Amos," *VT* 39 (1989) 170-73; J. Day, "Prophecy; in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, SSF; eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 46; and Sanchez-Centina, "Hermeneutics and Context." 170.

²⁶ Hoffman "The Exodus in Hosea and Amos; 171.

²⁷ Sanchez-Centina, "Hermeneutics and Context," 170.

²⁸ Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation*, 69-70. See also Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 398.

Deut 17:2, etc.) as the golden bull incident of Exod 32 almost did."²⁹ Moreover, the reference to this incident may also function as a warning to Israel. Just as the sin at Baal-Peor brought on a display of God's wrath, the Israelites of Hosea's day can expect the same.³⁰

Thus the Exodus-Wanderings motif serves as a model or type for God's dealing with the Israelites in the future, whether for discipline or deliverance. We now turn to three additional illustrations of Hosea's use of narrative texts from Joshua, Judges, and Kings.

Joshua

In Hosea 2 we have noted how the prophet turns from oracles of judgement upon the nation of Israel to a promise of future deliverance and the establishment of a new covenant. Within this promise oracle we read how the Lord promises to restore the nation by bringing her into the wilderness and promises to give her vineyards and the "valley of Achor" as a valley of hope (Hos 2:14-15 [MT=16-17]). The phrase "valley of Achor" (2:15 [17]) is undoubtedly a reference to Joshua 7 as the location of the punishment of Achan's sin. Achan's transgression involved taking the material goods from Jericho which God had placed under the ban. This type of hubris Hosea announces will not happen under the new covenant as the nation will be characterized by obedience through the enablement given her by God. This is indicated by the transformation of this very Valley of Achor, formerly the place best known for the location of Israel's high-handed disobedience, into a "door of hope" (לְפֶתַח תִּקְוָה, *lepetah tiqwa*).³¹ The change of names suggests the renewal of the covenant.³² Andersen and Freedman further comment on the broader significance of Hosea's use of the canonical events in Hos 2:14-15 [16-17]: "Yahweh has in mind nothing less than a *recapitulatio* of the Exodus, Wandering and Settlement. The references to 'the land of Egypt' and 'the Valley of Achor' in v 17 suggest the time span, though they appear in reverse historical order."³³

Judges

Another reference to an earlier biblical narrative passage is the mentioning of "the days of Gibeah" in Hos 9:8.³⁴ The citation of the

²⁹ Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 151.

³⁰ Chisholm, *The Minor Prophets*, 40.

³¹ See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 361; and Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation*, 99-100.

³² W. A VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990) 118.

³³ Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 269.

³⁴ The phrase also occurs in Hos 10:9.

phrase is for the purpose of establishing a comparison between Hosea's day with the wickedness of the period of the Judges. The phrase "days of Gibeah" is a reference to the rape of the Levite's concubine which led to her death (Judges 19).³⁵ The treacherous deed remained in the memory of the people as a premier example of a deed of decadence.³⁶ The fact that the people of Hosea's day have committed sins comparable to this atrocious event in Israel's past indicates the depth of depravity to which the nation had sunk.³⁷ The fact that this atrocious event almost led to the annihilation of one of the Israelite tribes may also serve as a warning of the extreme consequences Israel will soon face for its apostasy.³⁸

Kings

Another clear reference to an OT narrative text is found in Hos 1:4 in connection with the explanation for Hosea's naming his first son Jezreel. The stated reason for this name is that God "will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre of Jezreel." The king of Israel during Hosea's time was Jeroboam II (Hos 1:1) of the dynasty of Jehu. The dynasty had been established at Jezreel by the overthrow of Joram. Similar to the example above regarding the "Valley of Achor," Hosea refers to a location to evoke the memory of the deed with which the location became associated.³⁹ The events of Jezreel to which Hosea alludes are recorded in such passages as 1 Kgs 19:16-17, and 2 Kgs 9:14-37.⁴⁰

In conclusion, we have clearly observed that the prophet Hosea in the eighth century B.C. was well acquainted with earlier biblical narratives of Israel's history. We will next address the legal passages with which Hosea was familiar. As Hebrew legal texts are recorded in narrative contexts, it is proper that we begin with the Decalogue, which not only begins with the historical prologue referring to God's

³⁵ This interpretation is advocated by Jewish Medieval commentators such as Ibn Ezra and D. Kimchi. See *Miqra'ot Gedalot* 4. 296b.

³⁶ Hartom and Cassuto, *Minor Prophets*, 29.

³⁷ M. H. Segal, *Introduction to the Bible*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sepher, 1977) 1. 447 (in Hebrew).

³⁸ See Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 535.

³⁹ Similarly, Gilgal and Bethel, associated with the occupation of the land in Israel's early history, are mentioned in conjunction with the sinfulness of the nation which will result in being expelled from the land. See Chisholm, *Minor Prophets*, 31.

⁴⁰ Kaufmann believes the reference to bloodshed should be specifically understood as referring to the bloodshed of Naboth by Ahab. This sin includes the sin of idolatry. Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 6-7, 98; and Segal, *Introduction*, 1. 451. Similarly, see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 176. Another reference to an OT narrative may be in Hos 13:10 in reference to the Israelites request for a king in 1 Samuel 8. E.g., see VanGemeren, *Prophetic Word*, 115.

delivering the nation from slavery in Egypt but also occurs at the beginning of the legal tradition.⁴¹

Hosea's Use of Legal Texts

It is abundantly clear that Hosea and his audience were aware of the existence and authority of the written law. This impression is discernible in such statements as: "because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against 'my law'" (תּוֹרַתִּי, *torati* [8:1]), and "I wrote for them the many things of 'my law' (תּוֹרַתִּי), but they regarded them as something alien" [8:12]). The existence of written law is also presumed in Hos 4:6: "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God (תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהֵיךָ, *torat 'eloheyka*), I also will ignore your children."⁴²

Laws from Exodus and Leviticus

But Hosea cites explicit commands of the Mosaic law. Most notable is the citation of and allusion to the Decalogue.⁴³ For example, violation of the second commandment⁴⁴ is assumed in the context of the most distinctive component of the Book of Hosea, that of Hosea's marriage to Gomer, an adulterous woman (Hos 1:2). This marriage depicts Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh. The whole point of the lesson is without meaning unless it is understood that idolatry is a violation of prescribed law. As Sanchez-Centina has well stated: "In fact, we could regard Hosea as a long commentary on the prologue and the first two words of the Decalogue. . . . It is beyond question that the second commandment receives its deepest force in Hosea's ministry."⁴⁵ A passage

⁴¹ In Hos 12:9 and 13:4 the phrase "I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt" alludes to the narrative of Exodus but also reiterates the language of the prologue of the Ten Commandments. The Exodus event should be viewed as the "starting point of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel." See Hoffman, "The Exodus in Hosea and Amos," 170-73.

⁴² Segal, *Introduction*, 1. 447; and Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 6-7. 112-13.

⁴³ One could also mention in this context the prologue of the "Ten Words" which focuses on the action of the LORD bringing the nation out of Egypt. This was discussed in the previous section on Hosea's use of narrative texts in reference to Hosea's mentioning of the Exodus event. We see the prologue statement specifically in Hos 12:10 and 13:4. See Meir Weiss, "The Decalogue in Prophetic Literature," in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, ed. Ben-Zion Segal (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990) 72-73; and Sanchez-Centina, "Hermeneutics and Context," 170.

⁴⁴ Or the first commandment if Exod 20:2-6 is understood as one commandment. For discussion of the different traditions of enumerating the Ten Commandments, see J. H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 283-87, esp. 283.

⁴⁵ Sanchez-Centina, "Hermeneutics and Context," 169-70.

that not only assumes that idolatry is a clear transgression of law, but also contains an explicit reference to the Decalogue, is Hos 3:1: "The LORD said to me, 'Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they "turn to other gods" (פְּנִים אֶל-אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים), ponim 'el-'elohim 'aherim) and love the sacred raisin cakes.'" The use of the phrase "other gods" in Hos 3:1 instead of the expected "Baal" or "Baals" is to align the violation with the expressed commandment "have no other gods" (Exod 20:3), and would have been thus understood by the audience.⁴⁶

The most extended reference to the Decalogue in Hosea surely comes from Hos 4:2. Here the prophet refers to the sins of the northern Kingdom through a serial listing of several of the Ten Commandments. These transgressions include lying (שָׁחַת, kaheš),⁴⁷ murder (sixth commandment), stealing (eighth commandment), and adultery (seventh commandment).⁴⁸ Other passages in Hosea which refer to a violation of one or more of the Ten Commandments include Hos 6:9 (murder), Hos 7:1 (false witness and stealing), and Hos 7:4 (adultery).

In other Hosean contexts we may assume that legal texts from Exodus and Leviticus form the background for Hosea's statements and are thus assumed authoritative by the prophet and his audience. In Hos 1:2-9, as we have observed, God commands the prophet to take a harlot as his wife to emblemize and to evince the spiritual harlotry of the Israelites. It may be presumed that a legal text such as Exod 34:15-16 is understood to be the logical background which evokes the extreme measure. The passage reads: "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their god and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their god, they will lead your sons to do the same." The key word, "to prostitute" (זָנָה, zana), is used three times in this passage to describe the character of Israel's offense which results from an alliance with the pagan Canaanites.⁴⁹ The word is used metaphorically to indicate Israel's covenant disloyalty to Yahweh in violation of the first commandment.

⁴⁶ Weiss, "The Decalogue," 72-73.

⁴⁷ This is explicitly banned in Lev 19:11. Some suggest the phrase to be equivalent to "bearing false witness." See Deroche, "The Reversal," 402.

⁴⁸ The deviation of order is to be explained as an illustration of accepted literary license. Thus Weiss, "The Decalogue," 68. Day sees five commandments mentioned here ("Prophecy," 39). Stuart sees six infractions (*Hosea-Jonah*, 75-76).

⁴⁹ Fensham, "The Marriage Metaphor," 76. "Prostitution" is also the term used to refer to a violation of a treaty agreement among nations. See Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 27.

Hosea's teaching on the nation's spiritual adultery is clearly dependent upon such a concept.

In addition, it is also possible that Lev 19:29, which contains a prohibition forbidding the Israelites' daughters from falling into harlotry, lies behind the reference to the land being guilty of adultery (Hos 1:2). If harlotry is committed by the Israelites, the land will "fall into prostitution" and be filled with wickedness according to Lev 19:29. Thus Hosea's notion that the commission of adultery by Israel results in the land being guilty of adultery (כִּי זָנוּהָ תִזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ, *ki zanoh tizneh ha'ares* [Hos 1:2]) is a concept clearly borrowed from Lev 19:29 (וְלֹא תִזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ, *welo' tizneh ha'ares*).⁵⁰

Hosea's Use of Deuteronomy

Hosea appears to be aware of the book of Deuteronomy in its entirety. This awareness may be demonstrated not only through the common themes prevalent in each work but also by the borrowing of technical legal phraseology on the part of Hosea. John Day has noted a number of the parallel themes, including the condemnation of the syncretistic worship on the high places (Deut 12:2; Hos 4:13), idols being crafted by men's hands (Deut 4:28; Hos 14:3 [MT=4]), the love of Yahweh being the motive for bringing the people out of Egypt (Deut 7:7-8; Hos 11:1), the people of Israel as the son(s) of God (Deut 14:1; Hos 11:1), and the reference to Moses as God's prophet (Deut 18:15, 18; Hos 12:13 [MT=14]).⁵¹ To these may be added the concept of Israel's covenant relationship with God and the return to the promised land motif (Deut 30:1-10; Hos 14:1-4 [MT=2-5]).⁵²

Perhaps more striking than these conceptual parallels are the specific technical expressions of Hosea which were used in Deuteronomy. In Hos 2:2-13 [MT=4-15] we see Hosea describing his relationship with Gomer using the technical language of the Mosaic legislation of divorce from Deut 24:1-4. Fishbane nicely explains Hosea's use of Deut 24:1-4 in this passage:

⁵⁰ For an excellent discussion of the concept of the land being guilty of adultery in the context of Canaanite religion, see Wolff, *Hosea*, 15.

⁵¹ J. Day, "Pre-Deuteronomistic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm lxxviii," *VT* 36 (1986) 8. See also E R McCurley, Jr., "The Home of Deuteronomy Revisited: A Methodological Analysis of the Northern Theory," in *A Light unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976) 305; and M. Weinfeld, "The Emergence of the Deuteronomistic Movement: The Historical Antecedents," in *Vas Deuteronomium; Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft*, ed. N. Lohfink (Leuven: University Press, 1985) 89.

⁵² Weinfeld, "The Emergence of the Deuteronomistic Movement," 88.

Hosea speaks of a sexually promiscuous wife who follows (אלכה) other lovers and is divorced, but who subsequently decides to return (ואשובה) to her first husband (איש הראשון; cf. אִישׁ...הָרֵאשׁוֹן, Deut 24:1, 4) who then decides himself to return to her (אשוב) and to be reconciled in remarriage. In addition, this legal theme is allegorized both in Jeremiah's discourse and in Hos 2:4-15 [2-13] in terms of God's relationship to apostate Israel who follows the Canaanite gods, and in both texts marriage and sexual promiscuity are metonyms for the covenantal bond and infidelity.⁵³

Another example of Hosea's use of Deuteronomy is illustrated in Hos 5:15-6:1 where the prophet borrows the language from Deut 4:29-30. The text from Hosea reads: then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery (בַּצָּר לָהֶם, bassar lahem) they will earnestly seek me." This is clearly based on the Deuteronomy passage: "But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress (בַּצָּר לָהֶם) and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him."⁵⁴

A final example of Hosea's borrowing of technical Deuteronomistic terminology comes in Hos 9:3-4. Once again Fishbane notes Hosea's dependence on Deut 26:14 and other Pentateuchal laws:

The ideological background of Hos 9:4 may be approximately stated on the basis of known Pentateuchal sources and ideas. Thus, in connection with an old law preserved in Deut 26:14, a celebrant, upon bringing his tithe to the shrine, declares that he has neither eaten of it when in mourning (באני), nor disposed of it while impure, nor donated it to the dead: for such would have defiled the new grain. In this regard, one may recall that in the Holiness Code priests are prohibited the use of sancta (which include tithes) when they are in a state of defilement (Lev 22:3-16); and, comparably, Num 19:11, 14-16 indicates that everything in an Israelite mourner's tent is impure, as well as anyone who comes into it. ...The force of this analogical argument, and his use of the technical term אֹנִים, suggests that the people will be defiled by the food that they will eat in exile. In a word, because of the ritual aberrations, the existence of the people of Ephraim in Egypt and Assyria will be comparable to that of contaminated mourners.

In this manner, the prophet Hosea has exegetically reinterpreted Israel's life in exile in terms of mourners' food. The textual transformation is aggadic. For Hosea has not in any way reinterpreted the particular laws of mourners' food. Nor was that the intent. As in Hag 2:11-14, the aggadic rhetoric in Hos 9:4 does not exist for the sake of the priestly law, that is,

⁵³ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 311.

⁵⁴ See M Weinfeld, "The Emergence of the Deuteronomistic Movement; 88; and Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 106.

for the sake of its legal exegesis. Rather, the aggadic exegesis exists solely for its own rhetorical sake, and the law functions as the particular occasion for the rhetorical-exegetical enterprise which results, not more.⁵⁵

Other examples of Hosea's borrowing of language from Deuteronomy include the occurrence of the phrase **מִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**. This phrase is cited in Deut 32:8 in reference to the number of the Israelites in relation to the other nations in Hos 1:10 [MT=2:1],⁵⁶ the reference to the Israelites being gathered (**נִקְבָּץ**, niqbas) in Hos 1:11 [MT =2:2] from Deut 30:3, the sin of "turning" to other gods (**פָּנִים** **אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים**) in Hos 3:1 from Deut 31:18, 20, the forbidden practice of moving boundary stones (**כַּמְסִיגֵי גְבוּל**) in Hos 5:10 from Deut 27:17, the reference of returning from exile (**שְׁבוּת**, sebut) in Hos 6:11 from Deut 30:3,⁵⁷ the use of enemies "pursuing" (**רָדַף**) the Israelites in Deut 30:7 in Hos 8:3,⁵⁸ the prohibition against making idols according to the pattern in Hos 13:2 from Deut 4:16-18,⁵⁹ the use of the identical verbs (**שָׁכַח** / **שָׁבַע** skh / sb') expressing the idea of eating to one's fill and forgetting about God in Hos 13:6 from Deut 8:12-14,⁶⁰ and the Deuteronomic expression forbidding the worship of idols in Hos 14:8 [MT=9] and Deut 29:16-28.⁶¹

Cursings and Blessings (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28)

A section of Mosaic law from which the Israelite prophets drew heavily is the promised cursings and blessings in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.⁶² Hosea, in particular, made frequent reference to the cursings of the Mosaic Code.⁶³ Franklyn has nicely broken down the order of the many references of the Leviticus 26 cursings in Hosea:⁶⁴

5:2b //26:18,28 (the guilty will be chastised)
 4:5,5:5b //26:37 (the unfaithful will stumble)
 11:6,13:16 //26:25 (the vengeful sword will destroy)

⁵⁵ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 299-300. Cassuto and Hartom (*Minor Prophets*, 28) note that the passage is based on the prohibition expressed in Deut 24:16.

⁵⁶ See W Kuhigk, *Nordwestsemitische Studien Zum Hoseabuch* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press) 36.

⁵⁷ McComiskey, "Hosea," 100.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 121. This occurs also in Lev 26:36. See below.

⁵⁹ P. N. Franklyn, "Oracular Cursing in Hosea 13," *HAR* 11 (1987) 78.

⁶⁰ Weinfeld, "The Emergence of the Deuteronomic Movement," 89. Stuart (*Hosea-Jonah*, 204) maintains that the verse also reflects Deut 31:2.

⁶¹ For the latter reference, see McComiskey, "Hosea," 236.

⁶² See Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, xxxiii-xlii, for the types of covenant curses and blessing from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 found in prophetic literature.

⁶³ Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 6-7. 106.

⁶⁴ Franklyn, "Oracular Cursing," 73.

5:14,13:7-8 //26:22 (the wild animals will ravage)

4:10,13:6 //26:26 (the food will not satisfy)

To these should be added the following list of curses from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28:

8:3 // Lev 26:36 (the use of the enemy pursuing)

9:11,16 // Deut 28:18 (the barrenness of the womb)

9:17 // Deut 28:40, 64 (the wandering of the nation)

8: 1 // Deut 28:49 (the reference to נֶשֶׁר, neser)

8:3 // Deut 28:25, 31, 48, 53, 55, 57, 68 (falling to the enemy)⁶⁵

9: 15-17 // Deut 28:62-64 (diminution of the population)⁶⁶

Conclusion

It should be apparent that the prophet Hosea in delivering his message to the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the eighth century B.C. made frequent reference to earlier biblical texts which we know to be part of OT Scripture. In addressing the Northern Kingdom, Hosea pointed out that the nation was guilty of breaking various laws which involve violation of one's relationship to God and violation of one's relationship to his fellow man. They had indeed breached the covenant, having broken God's law, and could justly expect God's judgment. This frequent reference to the Mosaic law illustrates Hosea's familiarity with the Mosaic tradition.⁶⁷ Stuart may in fact be correct when he states that "there is no passage in the book that does not have the Mosaic scriptures as its basis."⁶⁸ Given the fact that the prophet cites the earlier tradition as having authority, we may be confident in assuming that the literature had long been accepted as canonical as it would take time for writings to take on an elevated theological status.⁶⁹

Yet Hosea, in using the previously written canonical passages, does not only quote the law as a warning of coming judgment. Hosea, as most of the writing prophets, also offers hope to the nation. In doing so he again bases his understanding on the canon of revealed

⁶⁵ McComiskey, "Hosea," 121.

⁶⁶ Both passages not only refer to the diminution of the populace but also employ the word נֶשֶׁר to express the admonition for obedience. McComiskey, "Hosea," 157.

⁶⁷ Fensham, "The Marriage Metaphor," 76.

⁶⁸ D. Stuart, "The Old Testament Prophets' Self Understanding of Their Prophecy," *Themelios* 6 (1980/1981) 11.

⁶⁹ It makes more sense to understand Hosea referring to established legal tradition in calling the nation back to obedience than in accepting critical scholarship which would view much of the canon and particularly the Pentateuch as coming from a later time. Note the circular reasoning of those who assume that Deuteronomy, for example, must have borrowed from Hosea. See Hoffman, "The Exodus in Hosea and Amos," 170-73.

Scripture.⁷⁰ It perhaps should be mentioned that the Hoseanic eschatological texts have as their background covenantal promises made to Israel by the Patriarchs. The promises made to Israel in Israel's covenants were the basis for the confidence of future blessings.⁷¹ The new Exodus and the new Creation particularly are motifs Hosea evokes to signify Israel's covenant renewal and restoration.⁷² The restoration of the nation will only be accomplished by divine sovereignty, an attribute of God pre-eminently displayed in the Creation and in the Exodus. Whereas, on the one hand the prophet refers to the Law to cite violation of the covenant, on the other hand he refers to God's gracious acts like the Creation and the Exodus as a basis of hope for the future of the nation.⁷³ As God had worked in Israel's behalf in the past, thus he would do in like manner in the future.

The Hosean citations from previously written Scripture indicate that the texts were already accepted by the Jews as canonical Scripture in the eighth century B.C. and were thus binding on the Israelite's everyday life. Moreover, the reference to these texts and themes demonstrates the prophet's use of preexisting Scripture, whether warning of judgment or assurance of salvation. Hosea's use of the OT serves as a forerunner to the manner in which his Jewish descendants in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the NT understood the fulfillment of OT Scripture.

⁷⁰ The future salvation of Israel is a hope based on the covenant between Yahweh and Israel that gave birth to the people of God and to its aspirations for the future. E. H. Maly, "Messianism in Osee," *CBQ* 19 (1957) 213.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² VanGemen, *Prophetic Word*, 115, 118.

⁷³ Similarly, see McKenzie, "Exodus Typology," 100-101.

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