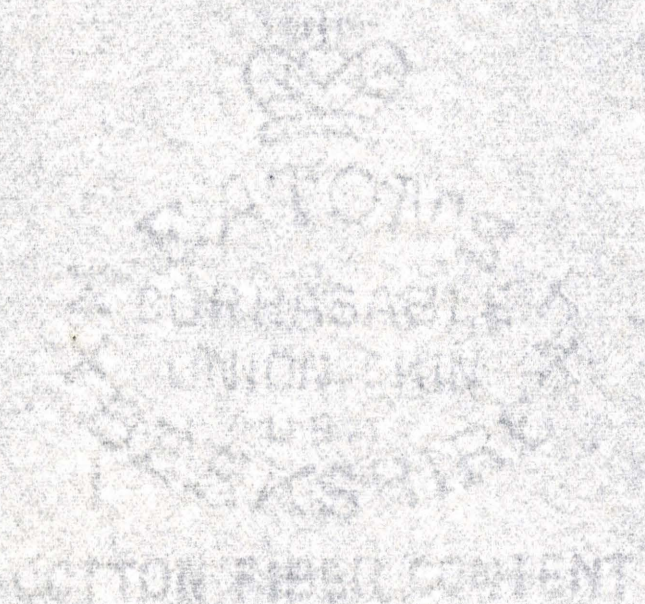


HOSEA 5:15-6:6

George W. Braswell
March 3, 1959

Old Testament Interpretation
Professor Childs



NOVA 813-8:8

Director of the
Department of Education

George W. Maswell
March 2, 1958

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✓
In the Hebrew
A personal name
is used. יהוה

It is not
necessary to
capitalize the
pronouns referring
to deity. The
only note, the
consistency.

I will return to my place until they are confounded by their guilt. Then, when they find themselves in this distress, they will seek me, saying, "Come on, let us return to the Lord, because although he has afflicted and punished us greatly, he will still take us back. It will be only a few days before he will take us back, and then we will be right with him. When we seek him, then we will find him, for just as the dawn rises and the spring and winter rains come to do us good, so will He come to our aid." But what can I make of you, Ephraim, and what can I make of you, Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. (I can make nothing of you, Ephraim and Judah, since your love is like a morning cloud and like the dew that goes away early.) Therefore, I will warn you through My prophets and will punish you, and My judgment will be just as plain as light. Because I desire from you faithful love and knowledge of God more than your sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Yahweh

T D II
: 11:
(Covenant
Love)

which ones?

The commentaries with which I worked agree that Hosea 5:15-6:6 should be treated as one section of material. The common trend of thought is that there are two soliloquies in 5:15-6:3, one being of Yahweh and the other being of the people. Also, the entire block of material is seen in two divisions, 5:15-6:3 dealing with the shallow repentance of Israel, and 6: 4-6 dealing with the incredulity and impatience and the desire of Yahweh for mercy instead of sacrifice. However, B^{ie}utterweiser differs from the commentaries. He sees Hosea 5:15b-6:3 as forming a logical conclusion to 5:1-15a, and as forming an important supplement to the prophet's outlook of hope and promise from 2: 16-25. The sermon concludes with 6:3, and 6:4 and following is the fragment of another sermon. Others regard 5:15-6:3 as a later addition, designed to relieve the gloom of the preceding verses. They say that these verses break the close connection between 5:14 and 6:4. These phrases are echoes in part of the preceding verses, and even have a close resemblance to later as-

who?

I will return to my place with them, when they find themselves in this distress, they will see me saying, "Come on, for as reason to the Lord because I know he has afflicted and punished us grievously, and will take us back. It will be only a few days before he will take us back, and then we will be right with him. When we see him, then we will find him, for just as the dew falls and the spring and winter rains come to do us good, so will he come to our aid. But what can I make of you, O Israel, and what can I make of you, Judah. You have made nothing of you, Ephraim and Manasse, since you love to like a morning cloud and like the dew that goes away early. (I can make nothing of you, Ephraim and Manasse, since you love to like a morning cloud and like the dew that goes away early.) Therefore, I will very soon through my progress and will punish you, and judgment will be given as light. Because I desire from you faithful love and knowledge of God more than your sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Psalm 110

The commentators with whom I worked agree that Hosea 5:15-6:6 should be treated as one section of material. The common trend of thought is that there are two collections in 5:15-6:6, one dealing with the other being of the people. And the entire floor of material at least in the divisions, 5:15-6:6 dealing with the call for repentance of Israel, and 6:1-6 dealing with the knowledge and ignorance and the desire of Israel for mercy instead of sacrifice. However, Rutenfranz differs from the commentators. He sees Hosea 5:15b-6:6 as forming a logical conclusion to 5:1-15a, and as forming an important supplement to the prophet's outlook of hope and promise from 5:16-6:6. The sermon concludes with 6:6, and 6:1 and following is the fragment of another sermon. Others regard 5:15-6:6 as a later addition, designed to relieve the strain of the preceding verses. They say that these verses break the close connection between 5:1a and 6:1. These phrases are common in part of the preceding verses, and even have a close resemblance to later as-

sertions, (14:1-9 and 6: 11-7:1.) In general, these are the oppos-
ing views to this section of Hosea, and as each verse is broken down,
it is hoped that what has been stated above will be better understood.

(5:15) "I will return again to my place;" God has already ad-
ministered disciplinary punishment to his people; he now returns to
his place. The next move must be with those who have broken cov-
enant with him (I.B.).^{*} Brown, however, says that 5:8-14 predicts the
punishment which shall come upon the people (W.C.). This is seen as
a soliloquy of God. Brown asserts that "to my place" should be un-
derstood as "hiding his face"; this expression indicates that he will
not interfere with the nation until the people feel their guilt, when
they will be only too ready to seek him out. "until they acknowledge
their guilt and seek my face and in their distress they seek me."

Both the I.C.C. and I.B. make textual changes here, rendering the
statement as "until they are confounded" and "until they are appalled."
"saying"; The word saying was added to indicate that 6:1 contains
the words with which the people return to the Lord, but it is mis-
leading in that it gives the impression that these words are sin-
cere. The I.B. says it is better to omit "saying" and regard 6:1-3
as an example of interjected direct speech and to determine the tone
of the verses from their own content. *The Hebrew text omits "saying" altogether.
It only appears in the LXX. ("deportes")*

(6:1) "Come, let us return to the Lord"; Israel is represented
as soliloquizing. "for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has strick-
en, and he will bind up"; The I.B. says that verse 1 may be taken as

* I.B., I.C.C., and W.C. stand for the Interpreter's Bible, the
International Critical Commentary, and the Westminster Commentary

*These are standard
abbreviations*

Harper

*Mauchline
Brown*

positions, (14:1-9 and 14:11-17). In general, these are the original views to this section of Hosea, and as such, are broken down. It is hoped that what has been stated above will be better understood.

(14:15) "I will return again to my place" God has already administered disciplinary punishment to His people; he now returns to His place. The next move must be with those who have broken covenants with him (1:8). Brown, however, says that 14:15 predicts the punishment which shall come upon the people (1:8). This is seen as a solidly of God. Brown asserts that "to my place" should be understood as "riding his back"; this expression indicates that he will not interfere with the nation until the people feel their guilt, when they will be only too ready to seek him out. "until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face and in their distress they seek me."

Both the L.C.C. and I.B. name textual changes here, rendering the statement as "until they are confounded" and "until they are expelled."

"saying": The word saying was added to indicate that 14:1 contains the words with which the people return to the Lord, but it is misleading in that it gives the impression that these words are significant. The I.B. says it is better to omit saying and regard 14:1 as an example of interrupted direct speech and to determine the tone of the verses from their own content.

(14:1) "I will return to the Lord"; Israel is represented as announcing, "for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has estranged us, and he will bind up": The I.B. says that verse 1 may be taken as

* I.E., I.C.C., and W.C. stand for the Interpreter's Bible, the International Critical Commentary, and the Westminster Commentary.

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a sincere utterance, showing no evidence of repentance or sorrow, but manifesting a straight purpose to return to God. But this expression of confident hope in this verse gives way to an attitude of easy complacency in verse 2. The I.C.C. points out that this verse is not confessional penitance, nor of Hosea's leading his people back, nor the language of the prophet to the people, but with 5:15 and 6:4ff., it and they are a dramatic representation in the form of soliloquy and dialogue of the attitude of the people to Yahewh and Yahweh to the people. It is, therefore, an expression of assumed repentance. Smith says that this prayer of 6:1ff. "offers one more symptom of the optimism of this light-hearted people, whom no discipline and no judgment, can impress with the reality of their incurable decay." (The Twelve Prophets, p. 283.) A certain metaphor, the rending as a lion, is mentioned in 5:14 and is taken up responsively in verse 1.

(6:2) "After two days he will revive us...;" The thought is that God will deliver the people in a short time. The restoration is to be speedy and without trouble, in two or three days all will be well again. The shallowness of popular religious attitude is seen in this statement. However, in the phrase, "revive us", and especially in these verb tenses of the future, the advocates of a later addition of this passage state their argument. The Babylonian exile could be regarded as the death of the people, for it would be a great calamity. this passage could be a later addition, possibly at the end of the exile.

(6:3) "Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;" The I.C.C.

Actually present (i.e. imperfect, implying incomplete action) in the Hebrew.

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and dialogue of the attitude of the people to Yahweh and Yahweh to
the people. It is, therefore, an expression of assumed repentance.
Smith says that this story of 2:15 "offers one more symptom of the
optimism of this light-hearted people, who in discipline and re-
pentment, can impress with the reality of their incredible power."
(The Twelve Prophets, p. 205.) A certain weakness, the weakness as a
fact, is mentioned in 2:14 and is taken up responsively in verse 1:
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(2:13) "After the days he will revive us to know the Lord" The I.C.C.

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paraphrases this as "let us be zealous to know Yahweh." This appeal is coordinate with verse 1 and not with "that we may live". When the people seek him then they will find him. The people are confident of success just as soon as they make the effort. The I.B. says that now they are aware that the knowledge of God comes to them gradually, and it must be persistently pursued and zealously sought.

"his going forth is sure as the dawn, he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rain that waters the earth;" This is to be better translated as "he will come as the winter rain, and as the spring rain which waters the earth." Winter rain denotes heavy, pouring rain which comes in December through February; the spring rains come in March and April. The proper ripening of fruits depends on these rains. This demonstrates, further, the certainty of the people being accepted by Yahweh. Just as sure as the dawn comes, Yahweh will accept the people.

(6:4) "What shall I do with you, O Ephraim...O Judah?" Yahweh speaks in a tone, not so much of rebuke as of despair. The I.C.C. says that the interrogative is really a negative. "I can make nothing of you." There is no allusion to a method of bringing about the good mentioned in the preceding verse, nor punishment in addition to that which they have already received. "Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early." The I.B. says that Israel's act is not accepted as genuine and sincere, but as an empty formality and as a self-regarding move. The Lord had done everything possible in the way of training his people; now there was

paraphrases this as "let us be realistic and say 'Yes'." This appeal
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(8:4) "What shall I do with you, O Frustrator, O Destroyer, Yahweh"

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 everything possible in the way of training His people; now there is

nothing more he could do. What was the use of making endeavors to redeem a people whose love was a transient thing like a morning cloud or dew that vanishes away quickly before the rising sun? ^{is} Buttenwieser considers ~~as~~ this fourth verse as a fragment of another sermon. He says that 6:1-3 speaks of sincere repentance, of true conversion; he asserts that it is obvious that these verses could not have been followed by an answer on God's part of questioning the sincerity of the people, the answer that the fourth verse gives. Buttenwieser ^{correct} considers the repentance true, as I have stated in the opening paragraph. The I.C.C. paraphrases this as, "Since your love is like the morning cloud, not the love of God for you will be quickening, nor the love of God for you will be transient like yours for him, but your love for God, your goodness, your piety is fleeting, transient. Yea, like the dew which early goes away." Crops need summer dew, but there is no beneficial effects this way.

(6:5) "Therefore, I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth;" The I.C.C. says the connection between verses 4 and 5 ^{is} ~~are~~ not as broken as some say. Verse 4 describes Israel as a people whose irresponsible conduct has occasioned anxiety and despair to God. This situation explains why in the past he has hewn or punished them by the prophets. Verbs here refer to past, not to present or future tense. "Slain by words of mouth" repeats or explains the preceding line of hewing them. The pronoun them refers to the people. The prophets in the past had not hesitated to threaten the people with death for their disobedience. The

...the use of the word 'love' in the Bible is not always in the sense of affection. It is often used in the sense of loyalty or devotion. For example, in the parable of the speck and the log, the man with the speck in his eye says to the man with the log in his eye, 'Come out, for your eye is full of logs.' This is not a statement of affection, but a statement of warning and rebuke. Similarly, in the parable of the fig tree, the owner says to the fig tree, 'You have not borne fruit for many years. You shall be cut down.' This is not a statement of affection, but a statement of judgment. In the same way, the word 'love' in the Bible is often used in the sense of loyalty or devotion, and not in the sense of affection. For example, in the parable of the two sons, the father says to the older son, 'I have been with you all day long, and you have not obeyed my commandments. But I have been with the younger son, and he has obeyed my commandments. I will send you to the vineyard, and you shall work there, and I will give you my share of the fruit.' This is not a statement of affection, but a statement of judgment and warning.

(13) Therefore, I have seen that the word 'love' in the Bible is often used in the sense of loyalty or devotion, and not in the sense of affection. For example, in the parable of the speck and the log, the man with the speck in his eye says to the man with the log in his eye, 'Come out, for your eye is full of logs.' This is not a statement of affection, but a statement of warning and rebuke. Similarly, in the parable of the fig tree, the owner says to the fig tree, 'You have not borne fruit for many years. You shall be cut down.' This is not a statement of affection, but a statement of judgment. In the same way, the word 'love' in the Bible is often used in the sense of loyalty or devotion, and not in the sense of affection. For example, in the parable of the two sons, the father says to the older son, 'I have been with you all day long, and you have not obeyed my commandments. But I have been with the younger son, and he has obeyed my commandments. I will send you to the vineyard, and you shall work there, and I will give you my share of the fruit.' This is not a statement of affection, but a statement of judgment and warning.

I.B. says it is possible to make this verse a historical statement. The people's love had always been weak, and the chastisement at the hands of the prophets had made no difference. However, the I.B. asserts that there is much to be said for construing the perfect tenses as prophetic perfects and so translating the line, "Therefore, I will hew them by the prophets, I will slay them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment will go forth as the light." Taken in this way, verse 5 pronounces judgment on the people. The second phrase illustrates the Hebrew idea that the spoken word was imbued with the power of the person who uttered it, and had power to fulfill itself. "My judgment goes forth as the light;" The judgment is that of which the execution now hangs over Israel. The word light describes the thought that all may see this judgment vividly, just as one sees the light, and they fear it. The Abingdon Commentary paraphrases this as, "God's judgment shall be unmistakable, seen by all, like the light."

(6:6) "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings." This passage is problematic because the question of God's attitude toward sacrifice is still very much alive today. The I.B. says it is better to use "assuredly" instead of "for", to make this statement as strong as its context implies. The I.C.C. paraphrases this as, "For it is love I delight in and not sacrifice." Love will gain Yahweh's favor in which obedience is emphasized. This love is not love for God, as distinguished from love for one's fellowmen, but both. The

I.E. says it is possible to make this verse a historical statement. The origin's love had always been weak and the statement at the end of the passage had made no difference. However, the passage asserts that there is much to be said for construing the passage as psychic evidence and as explaining the line, "For I fear, I will not heed by the prophets, I will risk them by the force of my mouth, and my judgment will go forth as the light." This is this way, verse 2, pronounces judgment on the people. The second phrase illustrates the Hebrew idea that the spoken word has power with the power of the tongue who uttered it, and has power to fill itself. "My judgment goes forth as the light." The judgment is a way of life. The execution now hangs over Israel. The word light describes the thought that all may see this judgment vividly, just as one sees the light and that is it. The Abraham command to v. 2, "God's judgment shall be unalterable" seems to fit like the light.

(2:13) "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." This passage is problematic because the question of God's attitude toward sacrifice is still very much alive today. The I.E. says it is better to use "steadfastly" instead of "for" to make this statement as strong as its context implies. The I.E.C. paraphrase, "For I desire I desire in and not sacrifice," love will give Yahweh's love for in which obedience is emphasized. This love is not love for God, as distinguished from love for one's fellow man, but both. The

8

I.C.C. interprets these phrases, "not sacrifice" and "not burnt-offerings" as strongly negative, but the I.B. interprets them in the sense not of "not burnt-offerings" but of "more than burnt-offerings". The I.B. says that "what is meant is that sacrifice as an expression of a living faith in the Lord may be a genuine religious act, but the Lord's delight is in the true knowledge of the demands of his services, and in the cultivation of that love which is his will for his people." The I.C.C. points out that Hosea makes a perfect parallelism—the knowledge of God and the love of God go together. Smith comments, "That the discourse comes back to the ritual is intelligible. For what could make repentance seem so easy as belief that forgiveness can be won by offering sacrifices?" (p. 285.) Brown says that most of those who ascribe these verses to Hosea (excluding B^{ie}utenweiser) regard the passage as a confession on the people's part so shallow and inadequate that Yahweh can do no more than reject it. This interpretation has the merit of connecting verse 5:15-6:2 not only with verse 5:14 but also with the following verses which otherwise would be left in thin air. Brown, then, gives a quick summary tying in the various verses. In 5:8-14 punishment is predicted; 5:15 describes how the people will feel guilt and seek Yahweh; 6:1-3 is their prayer or confession. But Yahweh sees how superficial their repentance is (6:4), and always has been (6:5), and declares that he can accept nothing short of a change of heart. Only hesed and the knowledge of God can save them (6:6).

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preceded seem so easy as belief that forgiveness can be won by
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who describe these verses as "exclusionary (Huttenwacker) regard
the passage as a reminder on the people's part to realize and
understand that Yahweh can do no more than reject it. This is
a repetition and the merit of connecting verse 2:15-2:23 not only
with verse 2:14 but also with the following verses which describe
this would be felt in this way. Brown, then, gives a much more
clear way in the various verses. In 2:15-2:23 punishment is pre-
dicted; 2:15 describes how the people will feel and seek Yah-
weh; 2:18 is their prayer or confession. But Yahweh sees how
unprofitable their repentance is (2:17), and shows that he has
and declares that he can accept nothing short of a change of heart.
Only peace and the knowledge of God can save them (2:23).

9

That this is a genuine message of Hosea and reflects his thought patterns through-out his book is true in my opinion, as I have tried to study these passages. It is very typical of the people in their ignorance, unfaithfulness and even stupidity to think that by their outward expression and in haste that Yahweh would quickly accept them. This passage shows that the people have no understanding of love and its quality of long-suffering, and of knowledge of God and his ways. I think Brown has a good interpretation when he connects 5:15-6:3 with the preceding verse 5:14 and the following verses 6:4-6. This draws the entire content of 5:15-6:6 together. There is still the question of the status of sacrifice before God, but for an interpretation of this, it would take another paper, and even then the question would probably not be resolved. This selection is God's message to his people; the people cannot expect to be accepted. For God desires the inward motives and outward actions of his people to be pure, and of the love and knowledge of him.

God

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20

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Let's be consistent and
indicate the author along with
each title.

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Handwritten notes in red ink:
This is a summary of the
contents of the book
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