

## THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET HOSEA

Hosea was a contemporary of Amos in Israel and of Isaiah and Micah in Judah. Jonah having given the scope of the Divine counsel and actions among the Gentiles, and Joel having given the Divine ~~message~~ ~~message~~ message to all, the prophets Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, etc. come to grips with ~~sage~~ ~~sage~~ God's ancient people, who were "stiffnecked and uncircumcised of heart and ears, and "always resisted the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:51). All the prophets testified against them and pronounced Divine judgment upon them; but they also announced the marvelous grace which God would show them in "the latter day", that is, in the End-time.

In the first three chapters Israel is described as being unfaithful to Jehovah. The Lord declared that the character of Israel is a bad one: the people are represented as being Jehovah's wife, but also as having proved unfaithful and adulterous. Instead of being the people of Jehovah (Ammi), Israel has become "Not my people" (Lo-ammi). However, God speaks thrice to them in grace, saying, that eventually Israel will again become God's people, many in number, and that they shall be re-united under one head", and they "shall come up out of the land", that is, they shall come forth from all the countries of the earth to which they had become scattered. That will be a great day: it is called "the day of Jezreel." This refers to Hosea's first son, Jezreel; so named, because God said, "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu". What idea underlies this? The place Jezreel was notorious for the crime of Ahab and Jezebel upon Naboth; and Jezreel was also the place where Divine judgment was visited upon Jezebel in a signal manner. At God's command Jehu had executed the Divine judgment upon the house of Ahab in Jezreel; but he had done this harshly and in his own interest, and hence Jehu also received judgment for this. Likewise many nations have been ~~and~~ and still are persecuting Israel in a frightful way. Indeed, from Deuteronomy onward God warned Israel