

Religiously...

- **the priests are at fault** (vv. 4-6)

ESV **Hosea 4:4** Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest. ⁵ You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. ⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Who?

What?

- **the priests and the people are at fault, together** (vv. 7-11)

ESV **Hosea 4:7** The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame. ⁸ They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity. ⁹ And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds. ¹⁰ They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply, because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish ¹¹ whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding.

Who?

What?

- **the people are at fault, as a whole** (vv. 12-14)

ESV **Hosea 4:12** My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore. ¹³ They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery. ¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

Who?

What?

- God cares about the religious practices of his people, which reveal their knowledge of and faithfulness to him.
- There is a mutually-consequential interplay between those who lead and those who follow in religious practices.
- The religious practices of God's people can appear to maintain the right forms, while mirroring worldly practices.

Sunday, January 18, 2026

Danny Capon, *Pastor*

Hosea—Faithless People Faithful God

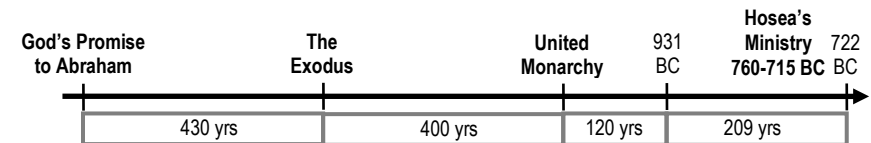
No. 7 | God's Contention with Israel—

The Priests and the People, pt. 2

Hosea 4:4-14

Review

The Book of Hosea: (1) It is the first book of the minor prophets in the Old Testament (starting on page 751 in the ESV Pew Bible); (2) It recounts the "word of the LORD" to Hosea, a man who served as a prophet in deed and in word; (3) His prophetic ministry was most immediately to the northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria), then to the southern kingdom of Judah (Jerusalem); (4) He began his prophetic ministry likely shortly before Jeroboam II died (753 BC) and concluded shortly after Hezekiah began to reign (729 BC).



The Book of Hosea is about the *faithlessness* of God's people and his *faithfulness* to them, illustrated most poignantly through marital (in)fidelity.

God's Contention with Israel—Priests and People, pt. 2

4:4-14

ESV **Hosea 4:1** Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has **a controversy** with the inhabitants of the land.

What is the "**controversy**" (contention) God has with Israel?

ESV **Hosea 1:2** "...the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."

ESV **Hosea 3:1** "...the children of Israel...turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."

ESV **Hosea 4:** ¹ There **is no** faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; ² there **is** swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

How does God's contention with Israel relate to their historical relationship to him?

ESV **Deuteronomy 31:16** And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' ¹⁸ And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods. ¹⁹ "Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. ²⁰ For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. ²¹ And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live

unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give."

How does God's contention with Israel (4:1-3) relate to 4:4 and beyond?

God's contention with Israel (4:1-3)

Against the priests and people—the religious life of Israel (4:4-5:7)
Against the princes and people—the political life of Israel (5:8-7:16)

What was Israel, the northern kingdom, like up to Hosea's day?

History (from 1876 BC to 931 BC)

about 950 years

- (1876 BC) **God's promise to Abraham**
- (1400 BC) **Canaan's land divided by tribe** (Joshua)
- (931 BC) **Israel's kingdom divided in two** (Jeroboam I)

^{ESV} **1 Kings 11:31** And he (Ahijah)said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and will give you ten tribes' ³² (but he shall have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), ³³ because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did.

^{ESV} **1 Kings 11:38** "And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. ³⁹ And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever."

History (from 931 BC to 752 BC)

about 180 years

Jeroboam I ^{ESV} **1 Kings 12:25** Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. ²⁶ And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. ²⁷ If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." ²⁸ So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." ²⁹ And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. ³¹ He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites.

Nadab ^{ESV} **1 Kings 15:26** He **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

Baasha ^{ESV} **1 Kings 15:34** He **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

Elah ^{ESV} **1 Kings 16:13** for **all the sins** of Baasha and **the sins** of Elah his son, which **they sinned** and which they made Israel **to sin**, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.

Zimri ^{ESV} **1 Kings 16:19** because of his sins that he committed, **doing evil** in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of Jeroboam, and for his sin which he committed, making Israel to sin.

Omri ^{ESV} **1 Kings 16:25** Omri **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD, and did more evil than all who were before him. ²⁶ For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins that he made Israel to sin, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.

Ahab ^{ESV} **1 Kings 16:30** And Ahab the son of Omri **did evil** in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. ³¹ And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him. ³² He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria.

Ahaziah ^{ESV} **1 Kings 22:52** He **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. ⁵³ He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger in every way that his father had done.

J(eh)oram ^{ESV} **2 Kings 3:2** He **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD, though not like his father and mother, for he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made. ³ Nevertheless, he clung to the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from it.

Jehu ^{ESV} **2 Kings 10:28** Thus Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel. ²⁹ But Jehu **did not turn aside from the sins** of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin- that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan. ³⁰ And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." ³¹ But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the LORD the God of Israel with all his heart. He **did not turn from the sins** of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin.

Jehoahaz ^{ESV} **2 Kings 13:2** He **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them. ³ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Syria and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael. ⁴ Then Jehoahaz sought the favor of the LORD, and the LORD listened to him, for he saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Syria oppressed them. ⁵ (Therefore the LORD gave Israel a savior, so that they escaped from the hand of the Syrians, and the people of Israel lived in their homes as formerly. ⁶ Nevertheless, they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin, but walked in them; and the Asherah also remained in Samaria.)

J(eh)oash ^{ESV} **2 Kings 13:11** He also **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, but he walked in them.

Jeroboam II ^{ESV} **2 Kings 14:24** And he **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

Zechariah ^{ESV} **2 Kings 15:9** And he **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

God tells Israel to listen up because he has a contention against them, which includes the priests and the people.

"This section contains several shifts in address along with some textual difficulties (4:4, 16-19) without clear solutions. These two characteristics, combined with the remarkable allusiveness of Hosea's poetry, make for a number of tentative proposals for interpretation. Overall, 4:4-19 elaborates on the charge against the people in 4:1-3, with the priesthood initially a major focus of attention (cf. 5:1)." (Dearman, p. 155)