

במדבר

Hosea, chapter 2, verses 1 to 22

Introduction

It should be noted that many translations number this chapter differently. The Masorah (the traditional Hebrew text on which our translation is based) has nine verses in chapter 1, and then begins chapter 2. Other editions of Hosea join the first three verses of chapter 2 to the nine verses of chapter 1, making the numbering of chapter 2 different.

Connection of haftarah and sidra:

The weekly sidra tells of Israel's numbers in the wilderness, and the haftarah begins with the promise that the people of Israel will be "like the sands of the sea, not to be measured or counted."

The setting:

Hosea lived in the 8th century B.C.E., and was a younger contemporary of Amos. He resided and preached in the Northern Kingdom, whose irreligious practices had become an abhorrence to God. Baal worship was common, and the God of the Covenant was increasingly forgotten.

For more on Hosea and his time, see our *General Introduction*.

The message:

The meaning of the haftarah can be understood only in conjunction with the first chapter of Hosea. At the behest of God, the Prophet had married Gomer, a prostitute, and had children with her. Her unfaithfulness becomes a metaphor for Israel's love affairs with other gods. But the Eternal will be like a forgiving husband, taking Israel (the faithless wife) back if she forswears her wanton ways.

1. A promise that foretells the happy conclusion. (1-3)
2. Israel portrayed as a harlot. (4-9)
3. The terrible consequences of faithlessness. (10-15)
4. The restoration. (16-22)