

“All the Prophets Testify”: Hosea 4:1-19

Midweek Bible Study – 2026 September 02

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<https://www.pilgrimlc.org/bible-studies/prophets>

Invocation & Opening Prayer

Follow-up to last class: pace, depth, other comments or questions? (Sorry for cancelling due to illness.)

Outline (the following is from *TLSB* p.1428; we are listing the major divisions and will expand/collapse them as we proceed through them [we previously noted possible alternate explanations for the arrangement, such as *CSSB* p.1351, and *God’s Word for Today*, p.3]):

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. Hosea’s Personal Issues as Prophecies (1:2-3:5)
- III. Various Oracles (4:1-14:9)

Roehrs-Franzmann (to some extent confer Keil-Delitzsch) comments: “Chs. 4-14 constitute one long commentary on the infidelity of Israel portrayed in chs. 1-3; the prophet denounces the concrete manifestations of that infidelity in the life of the nation, traces its history, and threatens unfaithful Israel with its consequences. Only at two points is the darkness relieved by the vision of a distant brighter day, I the unforgettable picture of God’s love Israel in ch. 11 and in the song of repentance and promise with which the book concludes, ch. 14.”

A. Yahweh’s Lawsuit against Israel (4:1-19)

- B. Court Called to Order (5:1-7)
- C. Warfare and False Repentance (5:8-6:6)
- D. Israel’s Guilt Congenital, but Not Incurable (6:7-11)
- E. Israel Becomes like All Nations in Apostasy and Judgment (7:1-16)
- F. Sow the Wind, Reap the Whirlwind (8:1-14)
- G. Days of Festival and Punishment (9:1-17)
- H. Israel’s Utter Destruction (10:1-15)
- I. Possibility of “Second Exodus” (11:1-11)
- J. Israel as Deceiver (11:12-13:1)
- K. Israel’s Final Judgment (13:2-16)
- L. Promise of Restoration (14:1-9)

Yahweh’s Lawsuit against Israel (4:1-19; perhaps note the ESV’s vertical strophe breaks):

4:1 *Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel:* the Divinely-inspired prophet Hosea calls those listening to “Hear the word of the Lord”, not the word of the prophet, *per se*. *CSSB* comments, “As the Lord’s spokesman, Hosea brought charges against unfaithful, covenant-breaking Israel”. Laetsch refers to a lawsuit over the Sinai Covenant. Although Hosea speaks of the Lord in the third-person, “the Lord”, the references to “my” contention (4:4) and “My” people (4:6) arguably could be of either Hosea in the first-person singular “my” (which seems unlikely) or of the Lord in the first-person singular “my” (which seems more likely) or of both Hosea and the Lord in the implicit sense of the first-person plural “our” (which seems to me most likely). As *TLSB* notes, “God still addresses Israel as part of His children but does so here within the context of a legal suit He brings against them.” Judah is mentioned separately in 4:15 (confer Keil-Delitzsch on the implication).

for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land: the Hebrew *riyb* that the ESV translates into English as “controversy” has to do with contending or striving in a legal setting; related are “contend” and “contention” in 4:4, conducting a legal suit; confer back to “plead” in 2:2, for example, also. The inhabitants of the land (confer 4:1d and 4:3) are the children of Israel, in this case those dwelling in the Northern Kingdom, as suggested by the separate mention of Judah in 4:15. Some find in Revelation 8:13’s calling of woe to those who dwell on the earth a reference to Hosea 4:1.

There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land: as *TLSB* notes, “faithfulness” (Hebrew *’emeth*) and “steadfast love” (Hebrew *cheched*, often “mercy” in the KJV) “often appear together in descriptions of God”. Regarding “knowledge” (Hebrew *da’ath*), *TLSB* says it can also be translated “wisdom” or “discernment” and “Often refers to the revealed knowledge God imparts to His covenant people.” Confer the lack of knowledge in 4:6. Roehrs-Franzmann says the knowledge “is both knowledge and acknowledgment of Him, of His active grace and the claim which His grace makes on people”. To the extent that God’s faithfulness and steadfast love are not being proclaimed and the people are ignorant of Him, in those and other attributes, and not themselves manifesting those attributes, any distinction between those attributes as God’s and those attributes as the people’s would seem to be irrelevant in this case, though what follows in 4:2 suggests that what is in view in 4:1 is more the people’s faithfulness, steadfast love, and knowledge of God that result from the proclamation of God and His faithfulness and steadfast love (or “mercy”; confer Keil-Delitzsch on human virtues’ being in sight). Regarding the land, confer 4:1b and 4:3, *et cetera*. Laetsch sees the three attributes/virtues as constituting three charges that are taken up in reverse order in all of what follows through nearly the end of the book.

4:2 *there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery:* we might think of God’s Second and/or Eighth, Fifth, Seventh, and Sixth Commandments, as we usually number them (confer Keil-Delitzsch). *TLSB* says, “Adultery, a major theme in this Book, comes last for emphasis.

they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed: perhaps there is an implied reference to repentance that should follow such sins? In the first portion, Keil-Delitzsch refers to a violent braking in upon others for the purpose of robbery and murder (confer one of Laetsch’s options for interpreting the clause). *CSSB* notes that bloodshed includes murder, assassinations (in some sense different from murder), and human sacrifices.

4:3 *Therefore the land mourns and all who dwell in it languish:* regarding the land, confer 4:1b&d above. Kretzmann says plainly, “the moral corruption of its inhabitants resulting in the physical destruction of the land and its products”. *TLSB* comments, “All creation witnesses against Israel and sorrows over her condemnation”, and *TLSB* refers to passages such as Romans 8:20-22, which also speaks of the hope that the creation will be set free from its bondage to corruption. The “languishing” (Hebrew *’amal*) has to do with growing or being feeble; *TLSB* comments, “Rather than finding natural and material abundance through her pursuit of Baal (2:5), Israel will find only hunger as the true Lord of creation removes His provision (2:9, 12).”

and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and even the fish of the sea are taken away: in some ways this following half verse is more “inclusive” than its preceding half verse, as the skies and land-adjacent sea are affected because of the conditions described in 4:1-2. The order here arguably “undoes” creation, in which God created first the living creatures of the sea, then the birds of the heavens, and then the living creatures on the earth (Genesis 1:20, 24), though Keil-Delitzsch sees the fish mentioned last to show the drought even dries up lakes and other waters. *GWfT* mentions that the reference may be taken figuratively but also mentions measures for the conservation of endangered species.

4:4 *Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest:* the margin of the ESV gives as an alternate translation of the Hebrew text “for your people are like those who contend with the priest”. As noted above at 4:1, the “contend” and “contention” are related to “controversy” and seemingly have to do with a legal case. Behind the ESV’s “accuse” is the Hebrew *yakach*, which can be decide, judge; adjudge, appoint; show to be right, prove; convince, convict, reprove, chide; correct, rebuke. The idea could be that no one else, especially not “the priest” being addressed, can speak to even this case while God is speaking. Others, such as Kretzmann (to some extent confer Laetsch), think the verse has something to do with people’s rebelling against the decisions the priests were to make in some cases. *CSSB* comments, “An indictment against the priests, whose duty it was to be guardians of God’s law and to furnish religious instruction” and “Hosea warned the priests not to lodge charges against the people for bringing God’s judgment down on the nation, for they themselves were guilty, and the people could also bring charges against them as Hosea provided to do” (though, again, Hosea’s charges appear to be God’s charges). *TLSB* comments, “God will not allow Israel’s religious leaders, esp its priests, to challenge or otherwise address His court while He judges. Rather, they stand accused.” *TLSB* further explains that the unnamed priest (note also that the “you” is singular) “represents the whole of Israel’s establishment. Ironically, he fulfills his duty as priest, since he stands to represent the many. Unfortunately, he is found incompetent and is not allowed to intercede. He can only listen while God speaks His righteous condemnation.” Not Hosea, but unfaithful prophets are similarly condemned in what follows. (Priests and prophets arguably are both part of Israel’s religious establishment and were both anointed, along with kings, who sometimes rightly or wrongly carried out what might otherwise be considered religious duties; remember the three-fold office of the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ. Kings come up later, for example, in 4:18 and much later in 13:9-11)

4:5 *You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night:* as noted at 4:4, the priest and the prophet are arguably both part of Israel’s religious establishment (Laetsch mentions the whole nation as a kingdom of priests; confer Exodus 19:6 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10). Regarding “stumbling”, *TLSB* explains, “Action of standing under God’s judgment (cf 5:5). Significantly, this is the final verb of the entire Book (14:9). Nevertheless, those who stumble can still be restored (14:1-2).” In the New Testament we think more of one’s stumbling (being scandalized) as being one’s falling into sin or falling from faith. Unclear is whether for anything perhaps more than “diversity and inclusion” the priest is mentioned as stumbling by day and the prophet as stumbling by night (Keil-Delitzsch says “the people and the prophets would fall at all times, by night and by day”). (At 4:6, *TLSB* says God’s revelation was to be taught day and night, with reference to Deuteronomy 6:1-9).

and I will destroy your mother: Roehrs-Franzmann calls the half-verse “Obscure”, commenting further, “Perhaps ‘mother’ means the nation. Some scholars emend the text to read ‘You have destroyed your people,’ which makes good sense in the context” (confer Keil-Delitzsch). *TLSB* refers to the imagery of 2:2, 5 and comments, “Faithless Israel is her portrayed as the mother of the representative accused priest.” Note also the mention of the priest’s children in 4:6. Both the source of the priest’s line and its continuation arguably are cut off, perhaps all the more significant due to the role that lineage properly played in the High Priestly line and Levitical lines. I was also reminded of expressions such as “the devil and/or his mother”, if the descendant is evil, how much more the parent.

4:6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*: regarding the lack of knowledge, confer 4:1. *TLSB* comments, “Because the priests failed to instruct and correct the people, all will perish together (cf v 1; 6:5). Instead of hearing God’s Word from the divinely appointed priesthood, the people seek knowledge from idols (v 12).” *CSSB* qualifies “Partly because”. Of course, the priesthood of the Northern Kingdom for generations had been schismatic from the Divinely-appointed priesthood. Note how double uses of knowledge, rejection, and forgetting link the various line portions of the verse.

because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me: with masculine singular Hebrew pronouns and suffixes, the focus continues to be on the one individual (however, compare, for example, Keil-Delitzsch). Again *TLSB* comments, “The individual priest being addressed embodies the entire nation’s rejection of God, who deposes him.” Roehrs-Franzmann comments, “The failure of the priests is not due to pardonable ignorance but to deliberate suppression of known truth.” *CSSB* describes the rejection as “Punishment in kind”. We might reflect on U.S. Senate Candidate James Talarico’s 2025 comments regarding Biblical accounts as absolute truth and whether or not children should be “indoctrinated” with such “propaganda” (the man has a Master of Arts and is pursuing a Master of Divinity from a Presbyterian Church USA seminary).

And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children: the ESV’s “forgotten” and “forget” are both the Hebrew *shakach*, which can be “forget” and “cease to care”. In some sense, the opposite of “knowing” is “forgetting” (not remembering). The implication regarding the children seems to be more catastrophic. *CSSB* comments, “The hereditary priesthood will come to an end”. The ESV’s “law” is the Hebrew *towrah*, which can be instruction of law in the narrow sense (which shows us our sin), as well as Gospel in the narrow sense (which shows us our Savior and forgives our sin), or both together, equivalent to law in the wide sense, as well as Gospel in the wide sense. Regarding the priest’s children, confer above at 4:5 regarding the priest’s mother. Of course, the priest’s children need not be limited to the priest’s own biological descendants but could be taken as all of the priest’s spiritual descendants, that is, as all of the people of the Northern Kingdom (confer, for example, Keil-Delitzsch), which seems consistent with “My people” as used earlier in 4:6 and later in 4:8 and 4:12, for examples. Or, the third-person plural that follows could be the priests and false prophets together as the religious leaders (*TLSB* does not explicitly say and could be taken as implying both, that the plural refers to religious leaders and that the plural refers to the people distinct from them, not that in the end there is much difference in their sin or resulting judgment, though a key distinction is that the religious leaders are in some sense responsible for the people’s sin and resulting judgment).

4:7 *The more they increased, the more they sinned against me*: regarding the switch from the second-person singular “you” to the third-person plural “they”, see above at 4:6 (note that the next “your” in 4:14 is masculine plural). Not surprisingly, more people who were corrupt meant that there was a total of more sin; *TLSB* comments simply, “This numerical growth only resulted in greater iniquity.” (*TLSB*’s comment on 4:8 suggests some logical connection between the increasing sin of 4:7 and 4:8.) Keil-Delitzsch says not only increased population but also increased power, wealth, and prosperity, as a result of which the population increased.

I will change their glory into shame: what the ESV translates “glory” in Hebrew is *kabowd*, and “shame” is *qalown*. *CSSB* sees the “glory” as “the honor of the priestly office”. *TLSB* comments, “The idolatrous behaviors that were once the people’s boast will soon become their condemnation.” Of course, God Himself should have been the people’s glory, and they essentially were “ashamed” of Him. Some find in Philippians 3:19’s mention of glorying in shame a reference to Hosea 4:7.

4:8 *They feed on the sin of my people*: the margin of the ESV gives as an alternate translation of the Hebrew text “sin offering” (Hebrew *chatta’ah*), and that alternate translation perhaps makes better sense of this half-verse, and perhaps also helps with the following half-verse. In both halves of this verse, “they” reads more naturally of the religious leaders than of the people (confer, for example, Keil-Delitzsch), either apart from the religious leaders or even including the religious leaders (in 4:12 the people seem to become the third-person plural “they”). *CSSB* comments, “Priests devoured the sacrifices” and “profiting from the continuation of the sin rather than helping to cure it”. As *TLSB* notes, “This image ironically contrasts with Lv 6:26, where Israel’s priests consume portions of the sacrifices offered to the Lord” (Leviticus 6:24-30, uses the same Hebrew *chatta’ah* for “sin offering”). Unclear is whether any sacrifice is referenced in the following half-verse, and, if so, whether the religious leaders benefitted from an increase in those sacrifices, whether by eating or drinking of any food or beverage products or by receiving any monetary value (perhaps confer Leviticus 5:17’s association of “guilt” [‘*asham*] and “iniquity” [‘*avon*, as in the next half-verse], though atonement offerings with blood were not to be consumed, for example, per Leviticus 6:30). The idea of the religious leaders’ eating and drinking arguably continues through 4:9 and into 4:10 and 4:11. Laetsch seems to be willing to take the eating more broadly of any offering at Bethel and Dan as sinful since they were not offered in the right place by the right priests.

they are greedy for their iniquity: presumably this following half-verse should be read in some way as poetically parallel to the preceding half-verse. Seemingly the priests are greedy for the increased iniquity offerings that the people’s increased iniquity would bring to the priests, especially instead of trying to keep the people from sinning. *TLSB* comments, “The priests both plant the seed of sin and feed on its harvest. Though Baal was thought to be the source of food (2:5), the people’s idolatrous worship, led by the priests, yields only a harvest of increasing sin. Tragically, both priests and people are eager for this illicit fruit.”

4:9 *And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds*: *TLSB* comments, “Rather than leading, the priests are following the people into idolatry and so will receive a similar punishment.” St. Paul’s idea of imitating the ministers as they imitate Christ and so the need for upholding a high standard for ministers is related and relevant.

4:10 *They shall eat, but not be satisfied*: “they” here could still be a plural of the religious leaders, perhaps until 4:12, where “My people” seem to become the subject (compare Keil-Delitzsch, however, who says 4:10b is the entire nation). If the priests are still in view as “they”, then 4:10 arguably can be seen as continuing the idea of partaking of the sacrifices mentioned beginning in 4:8. The eating of the food ironically does not leave them filled, as in the next verse portion sexual intercourse does not produce new life. Different is *TLSB*, “The Lord’s judgment renders the people’s gain unrewarding. Rather than growing, they shall waste away.” We might reflect on demographic trends in developed nations, especially with high abortion rates, low marriage and birth rates, the promotion of homosexuality, and the like (confer *The Babylon Bee*’s recent satirical article that the devil and his demons think maybe he went too far).

they shall play the whore, but not multiply: compare the “multiplication” of 4:7, though it is not called that. What the ESV here translates “multiply” in Hebrew is *parats*, which can refer to breaking or bursting out from the womb (perhaps why the ESV translates “multiply”?). In Genesis 1:28 and 9:1&7, what the ESV translates “multiply” in Hebrew is *rabah*, which can refer to becoming numerous; interestingly both verbs are used in Exodus 1:12 to refer to the people multiplying (*rabah*) and spreading abroad (*parats*). I suppose there is intentional irony in the procreative act not resulting in procreation, though perhaps people today are so used to trying to keep the procreative act from being procreative that we might miss the irony.

4:11 *Because they have forsaken the Lord to cherish whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding*: the placement of the verse division seems somewhat problematic. Note the contrast of “forsaking” and “cherishing”. *TLSB* describes the people as “Having forsaken God and provoked His abandonment of them (v 6)”. *TLSB* notes that the Hebrew has two words for wine, but *TLSB* does not tell you how they might be distinguished. There is the Hebrew word translated “wine” (*yayin*), used some 140 times, and the Hebrew word translated “new wine” (*tiyrowsh*), which is used some 38 times, including, as *TLSB* points out, in 7:14 and 9:2, which and refers to “wine”, “fresh or new wine”, “must” (the fresh juice with all the skins and stems and such), and “freshly-pressed wine”. Juice that has not fermented would not have any intoxicating properties, and this verse is the only place in the Old Testament where *tiyrowsh* might be thought from the context to be intoxicating. Laetsch says in this case “new wine” refers “particularly to drinking and feasting being made the chief objects of one’s life, inordinate desire for enjoyment.” (Could there be an unwillingness to let it ferment?) Much more than is necessary for our purposes here might be said about percentages of alcohol, dilution, and drunkenness. *CSSB* comments, “Alcoholic excess was a part of the fertility cult, as an expression of gratitude to the god or gods who gave the wine and to induce religious frenzy.” As for the loss of understanding, recall the lack of knowledge in 4:1 and the rejection of knowledge in 4:6 (and confer 4:14). *TLSB* comments, “Inflamed by wine and urged on by the priests, the people engage in illicit sexual relations that rob them of their understanding (lit, ‘heart’) so that they lust after idols. Then, as now, substance abuse brings self-destructive sin. God’s people must clearly see how excess leads to destruction (Ephesians 5:17-18).” The wine and whoredom could be connected to the meals worshipping the idols.

4:12 *My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles*: the two verse parts are obviously related. Mentioned above is that “My people” might at this point become the “they” subject of the third-person plural verbs. *TLSB* notes the contrast between “My people” and “their walking staff”. *CSSB* says the NIV’s “stick of wood” might be either the wooden idol or a “diviner’s rod”. The walking staff also obviously is not giving them actual oracles, though they presumably are imagining that it is. *TLSB* refers to the people’s seeking “spiritual knowledge through the created order rather than through the Creator” and explains that “Divination likely involved the casting of rods on the ground and the interpretation of the resultant pattern.” Only one staff is mentioned. We might recall Aaron’s staff and the magicians of Egypt’s staffs (Exodus 7:8-13).

For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore: confer the translation of the same Hebrew word as “wind” in 4:19. One might wonder whether the “spirit of whoredom”, in the context of this strophe of Hosea, could be the “priest”.

4:13 *They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills*: *TLSB* comments, “High places were common sites for the worship of idols”. *GWfT* refers to Hebrews 9:11-14 and 10:1-14 and discusses why no such sacrifice needs to be made anymore.

under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good: *TLSB* comments, “From tree wood they fashioned idols, and in the shade of the trees they found comfort.”

Keil-Delitzsch says the trees were not necessarily only on the tops of mountains or hills but also in the plains and valleys.

Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery: *TLSB* comments, “The pagan sacrifices likely included ritual prostitution. This fact adds further nuance to Hosea’s recurring imagery of Israel’s unfaithfulness to her husband, the Lord.”

4:14 *I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery*: *CSSB* comments, “The men would punish their women for immorality, but God would have no part in their hypocrisy.” *TLSB* comments, “God shows a degree of forbearance toward the women involved, esp the daughters, because the husbands and fathers are considered most responsible for this sexual abomination. This follows the logic of the Lord’s singling out the priests in vv 4-9, because they were also guilty of failure in leadership.” Laetsch is contrary, “That is not a relaxation of the Sixth Commandment, a more lenient view of the failings and foibles of the weaker sex (so Sellin); it is one of the most horrible judgments of God on an apostate nation”.

For the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes: As *CSSB* notes, the NIV’s “harlots” or “common prostitutes” are distinguished from the “shrine prostitutes” or “cultic prostitutes”. *TLSB* explains, “Men had illicit sexual relations with women at the high places, believing Baal would then ensure the fertility of the land.”

and a people without understanding shall come to ruin: *TLSB* essentially calls the saying a proverb. *CSSB* refers to parents “hurt and shocked withn their children become as delinquent as they”.

4:15 *Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty:* above at 4:1 we noted this separate mention of Judah. The Northern Kingdom seems to be warned against letting its idolatry and general unfaithfulness negatively influence the Southern Kingdom. Kretzmann comments that “the members of this nation were still trying to maintain the Lord’s worship”.

Enter not into Gilgal, nor go to Beth-aven, and swear not, “As the Lord lives.”: *TLSB* says Gilgal and Beth-aven were “The main shrines in Israel, just west of Jericho and north of Jerusalem” (perhaps the proximity to the Southern Kingdom explains the link between the half-verses?). *CSSB* says “Beth-aven” or “House of Wickedness” is a sarcastic substitute name for “Beth-El” or “House of God”. *TLSB* says the oath mentioned “had a proper use”, though “not in unfaithful worship of idols”.

4:16 *Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn:* *TLSB* comments, “Refusing to be led by its owner, Israel rebels against her Creator.” *GWfT* refers to the name as appropriate due to the people’s worship of the golden calves.

can the Lord now feed them like a lamb in broad pasture?: *TLSB* explains that “broad pasture” “Often signifies a place of security” and that “A lamb might be counted on to remain near her shepherd in an open space. Israel, however, cannot be trusted to stay with the Lord because of her past unfaithfulness.” In this half-verse, the third-person masculine plural suffix translated “them” conceptually agrees with “Israel” as a singular collective in the first half-verse (confer and compare the third-person singular in 4:17 and the return to third-person plural in 4:18 and 4:19).

4:17 *Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone:* “Ephraim”, *TLSB* reminds us, “Strongest of the 10 northern tribes; stands as an embodiment of Israel” (was one of Joseph’s sons whose tribe inherited with his uncles’ tribes). The third-person masculine singular Hebrew suffix translated “him” in the second half-verse agrees with “Ephraim” as a singular collective plural in the first half-verse (confer and compare the singular and plurals in 4:16 and 4:18 and 4:19). Regarding “leave him alone”, Kretzmann says, “it would be useless to try to take him from his idolatry; he is utterly stubborn”, and *CSSB* explains “Nothing could be done to help”.

4:18 *When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring; their rulers dearly love shame:* the ESV text note indicates that the Hebrew *magen* is more-literally “shields”, and *TLSB* notes that the word is “often used for princes or kings”. We noted this verse’s mention of secular leaders above when discussing the religious leaders earlier. The third-person plural “their” and “they” refer to the many people in the Northern Kingdom, also referred to as the singular Israel or Ephraim. *TLSB* comments, “Even as Israel finishes one sin, another is quickly undertaken. Be it drunkenness or prostitution, the people’s pursuit of wickedness is boundless” (confer 4:2’s “break all bounds”). Confer 4:7’s mention of “shame” with the same Hebrew word, and compare 4:19’s mentioned of being “ashamed” with a different Hebrew word.

4:19 *A wind has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices*: confer the translation of the same Hebrew word as “spirit” in 4:12. *TLSB* comments, “Just as wind drives the chaff into dispersion, so the coming exile will sweep away the people of Israel”. Compare 4:7 and 4:18’s mention of “shame” with a different Hebrew word. Regarding the translation of the Hebrew usually translated “altar” as “sacrifices”, *TLSB* says in this case it “refers to the sacrifices being made to Baal.” *CSSB* comments, “By means of their sacrifices they hoped to flourish, but God’s punishment for their idolatry would bring them into disgrace among the nations”.

What are you taking home from the prophecy considered tonight?

TLSB’s Law and Gospel Application Note for Hosea 4:1-19 says, “God’s judgment against Israel focuses on the priests and their failure of leadership, because they have permitted and even encouraged the people to engage in gross idolatry. Today we see similar failures in leadership, not only among the clergy and secular leaders, but also in parents. It is a great comfort, then, to know that the Church ultimately depends on Christ, the true Good Shepherd. The Resurrected One promises that He will never lose any of the sheep the Father has given Him but will keep them and raise them up on the Last Day.” (The Note should not be read in any way that relieves people from their responsibility to seek out and support faithful pastors and congregations.)

Next time, September 16, Hosea 5:1-7

Closing Prayer & Benediction