

Hosea 12:12-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/hos/hos-12/hosea-1212-14/>

Hosea draws more lessons from the life of Jacob to urge Israel to remember how God has delivered Jacob and his descendants through His prophets. Because Israel fails to listen to God's warning, he will suffer the consequences of his sins.

Following God's speech on Israel/Ephraim's corrupt spiritual condition (vv. 7–11), the prophet Hosea returned to the theme he first used at the beginning of chapter 12, drawing on lessons from Jacob's life to compare him with his descendants. Earlier, Hosea had exhorted Israel to learn from Jacob, who matured from being a deceiver to persistently pursuing God's blessing (Hosea 12:3-4).

Now Hosea highlights another episode from Jacob's life, saying *Now Jacob fled to the land of Aram* (vs 12, see map). After deceiving his brother Esau, *Jacob* left the land of Canaan and traveled to *Aram*, to the home of his uncle "Laban in Paddan-aram" to escape Esau's wrath (Genesis 28:5). There *Israel/Jacob worked for a wife and for a wife he kept sheep* (vs 12). Jacob's experience at his uncle's house was difficult because he had to work seven years in order to acquire a wife (Genesis 29:18–20, 30:31, 31:38–41).

Later, Jacob and his family had to move to Egypt because of a severe famine. While in Egypt, the Israelites knew nothing but hard labor. They were in slavery in Egypt, serving Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In both instances, Jacob endured difficulty and hardship. But his deliverance came through *a prophet*.

But by a prophet the Lord brought Israel from Egypt and by a prophet he was kept (vs 13).

The LORD used His *prophet* Moses to redeem the Israelites from slavery in *Egypt*. Through Moses, God rescued Israel by the greatness of His arm (Exodus 15:16). Not only did He keep them, He also protected them throughout their wilderness wandering (Deuteronomy 8). The phrase *by a prophet he was kept* refers to Jacob/Israel being preserved and protected by God through Moses during their deliverance from Egypt.

The lesson seems to be that the way out of difficulty comes through listening to God, and following His word. However, it seems that Israel is committed to following their own way, which is a path of self-destruction.

Despite the LORD's provisions and protection, Israel has not listened to His prophet or returned to Him. Rather, *Ephraim (Israel) has provoked to bitter anger* (vs 14). Israel/Jacob/Ephraim, through his idolatrous practices, had caused the LORD to become angry.

Therefore, consistent with the covenant agreement Israel had entered with God, He would now invoke the provisions of the agreement for disobedience (Deuteronomy 4:25-27, 32:16, 21). Due to Israel's breaking of the covenant, *his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him and bring back*

his reproach to him (vs 14). The consequences for disobedience were clearly laid out. Israel chose to disobey, therefore they had chosen *reproach*.

The term translated as *Lord* here is “Adonai,” which speaks of God as Israel’s master or ruler. Pursuant to the suzerain-vassal treaty structure Yahweh God had entered into with Israel, now their Suzerain (Ruler) God would repay Israel/Ephraim for his evil deeds. For breaking the covenant agreement, Israel would suffer the consequences of his sins. Ephraim would thus experience shame and humiliation.

For more, read [our article on Suzerain-vassal Treaties](#).

Biblical Text

**¹² Now Jacob fled to the land of Aram,
And Israel worked for a wife,
And for a wife he kept *sheep*.
¹³ But by a prophet the Lord brought Israel from Egypt,
And by a prophet he was kept.
¹⁴ Ephraim has provoked to bitter anger;
So his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him
And bring back his reproach to him.**