

Hosea 6:2-11

(Not sure why the haftarah leaves out the first verse. Let's read the whole chapter anyway).

On the third day

Hosea 6:1-3 - "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

"Revive" is "*chayah*" and can mean either to preserve someone alive, restore the dying back to life, or restore the dead to physical life (**Deuteronomy 32:39, 1 Samuel 2:6**).

Compare:

Deuteronomy 32:39 - "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive (*chayah*); I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

The first three verses seem like a beautiful expression of repentance. But on closer inspection, the Hebrew manuscript could also be interpreted as the Israelites encouraging themselves with a shallow and superficial understanding of what God requires. (See the NET and Jerusalem Bible notes on this)

The "two days" and "third day" are idioms that can mean simply "a very short time." According to this reading, the Israelites are minimizing their sins and the crisis they're in. Overconfident, they assume the Lord's discipline will be short and he will restore them quickly.

But I think there's a better explanation.

The Septuagint, Rashi and the Targum, as well as the Arabic, Syriac and Chaldee manuscripts, don't interpret this as something Israel is currently saying. It's what they *should* be saying if they are truly repentant. These manuscripts add the word "saying" before the first word in verse 1, making it a continuation from the previous chapter of Hosea:

Hosea 5:15 - "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early, (Hosea 6:1) - "saying" Come, and let us return unto the LORD: etc."

In that light, the verses prophetically reflect the cry of truly repentant Israel in the future, maybe during the exile, but also of Jesus on the cross, and the proper result of repentance, which is the hope of the resurrection ("after three days").

“In the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”

The Targum’s paraphrase doesn’t mention the three days at all, but solidly links it to resurrection, saying, “In the day of the resurrection of the dead he will raise us up that we may live.”

Interestingly, Rashi comments that “on the third day” means, “With the construction of the third Temple, He will set us up.”

Recall that Jesus identified himself as the Temple:

John 2:18-19 - “On account of this, the Jews demanded, ‘What sign can You show us to prove Your authority to do these things?’ Jesus answered, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.’”

This was brought up again while Jesus was on the cross:

Matthew 27:39-40 - “And those who passed by heaped abuse on Him, shaking their heads, and saying, ‘You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!’”

“According to the Scriptures”

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ...” (**1 Corinthians 15:3–4**).

Paul was probably thinking of several scripture references to the “third day” as well as this passage in Hosea. The third day is often a day of completion and climax.

Matthew 12:40 - The Sign of Jonah - “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Abraham and Isaac reached Mt. Moriah on the third day (**Genesis 22:4**). According to rabbinic tradition, Isaac was considered dead for those days, until the ram was provided.

“Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death” (**Hebrews 11:19**).

On the third day after Joseph interpreted the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners - both of whose dreams included a symbolic “three” - one of the men was hung and the other man restored to his former position (**Genesis 40:1–23**).

God told the children of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai to be ready for the third day “because on that day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the

people” (**Exodus 19:10**).

After three days the Israelites crossed the Jordan — by the miraculous intervention of God (**Joshua 1:11; 3:2**).

King Hezekiah, sometimes seen by the Rabbis as a messianic prototype, was promised healing after three days. (**2 Kings 20:5-8**).

[See http://jewishroots.net/library/anti_missionary_objections/on_the_third_day.html]

The link to the week’s Torah readings is that after Joseph placed his brothers in the pit/prison for three days, he then released them.

Genesis 42:18 - “And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:”