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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Hosea 1.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Hosea 1.

Topics.

- God tells Hosea to take a prostitute for a wife.
- Hosea takes Gomer as his wife who gives birth to a son named "Jezreel."
- Gomer gives birth to a daughter named, "No Mercy."
- Gomer gives birth to a son named, "Not My People."
- The children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

INTRODUCTION: Hosea has been called the "death-bed prophet of Israel" because he was the last to prophesy before the Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria (about 722 B.C.). His ministry followed a golden age in the Northern Kingdom, with a peace and prosperity not seen since the days of Solomon. Unfortunately, this prosperity led to moral decay, and Israel forsook God to worship idols. So God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, whose unfaithfulness to her husband would serve as an example of Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

Hosea then explained God's complaint against Israel and warned of the punishment that would come unless the people returned to the LORD and remained faithful to him. The book shows the depth of God's love for his people, a love that tolerates no rivals.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

The Word of the LORD comes to Hosea.

Hosea 1:1 ----- ¹The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Hosea: means salvation, throughout his marriage Hosea is a symbol of the LORD. Amongst all the prophetic material contained in the Old Testament the writings of Hosea are the only ones to emerge from the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

An age of material prosperity: the time of Hosea was marked by great material prosperity. Under Jeroboam 2 the Northern Kingdom experienced a degree of economic and commercial development unknown since the early days of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon.

The upper and the working class: the development of city life attracted many people from the agricultural pursuits which had formed the basis of the Israelite economy, and this presented serious problems at a later time. The characteristic of this period was the rise of the successful middle-class businessmen, which was offset by the appearance of an urban working class. The latter came into being because of the wanton demands made by the luxury-loving upper classes upon the increasingly impoverished peasants and smallholders.

As the working class succumbed to economic pressure they were compelled to abandon their property and seek whatever employment was available in urban centres. This resulted in an ominous social gap between the upper and lower classes, which was a serious indication that something unpleasant, was going to happen for the future of the nation's economy.

Hosea and visions: Hosea was a man of profound spiritual visions, he was gifted with intellectual qualities which enabled him to comprehend the significance of those unhappy events which marked his domestic life and interpret them as a timely reminder of Divine love towards a wayward, sinful Israel.

The religious life of Israel: ever since the days of Joshua the religious life of the Israelites had been dominated by the influence of corrupt Canaanite worship. This seductive worship had already gained a firm foothold in Israelite religious life before the period of the Judges and by the time of Amos and Hosea Canaanite cult-worship had become the religion of the masses.

The deities chiefly venerated were the fertility god Baal (from a word meaning "lord" "master" or "husband") and his consort Anat (sometimes known as Asherah or Ashtoreth), a savage, sensual female. Both deities were often worshipped under the form of bulls and cows, so that when Jeroboam 1 set up two golden calves one at Dan and the other at Bethel (1 Kings 12:28), he was encouraging the people to indulge in the fertility religion of Canaan. The cultic rites were celebrated several times each year, and were marked by drunkenness, ritual prostitution and indulgence in pagan forms of worship at the shrines, the wide spread prevalence of cultic prostitution is evident from the fact that in Jeremiah's day, a century after the time of Hosea, prostitution flourished in the Temple precincts (2 Kings 23:7).

Hosea saw that this form of worship was the exact opposite of what God desired of His people. The emphasis of the Jewish covenant was upon the exclusive worship of Jehovah by a nation holy to God. However, the religious life of the covenant people had degenerated to the point of becoming identified with the shameless immoral worship of the pagan Canaanite deities. The emphasis upon unbridled sexual activity coupled with excessive indulgence in alcohol was sapping the vitality not only of the Canaanites, but also of Israel. All this was carried out against a background of magic and pagan mythology and was clearly vastly removed from the purity of worship contemplated in the covenant Israel entered into with God at Mount Sinai.

Hosea's calling: it was Hosea's primary duty to recall wayward Israel to its obligations under the covenant made at Sinai. On that occasion Israel had voluntarily made a pact with God which involved surrender, loyalty and obedience to God only and as a result Israel had become God's son (Hosea 11:1) (Exod. 4:22) by adoption and Divine grace. The initiative had come from God, but Hosea saw that it was important to emphasize the free co-operation and acceptance of the covenant and relationship by the Israelites, and therefore stressed that Israel was God's bride (Hosea 2:7), 16, 19) and used the marriage metaphor to demonstrate the voluntary association of the Bride with her Divine Lover.

Hosea's life was a parable for all to see: Hosea's own marital experience was made a parable for all to see (Hosea chapter 1-3). He was commanded to marry a woman who would subsequently be unfaithful, to have children by her, and to give them symbolic names indicating divine displeasure with Israel. After Gomer had pursued her lovers (even though in a married relationship) she was to be brought back and with patient love and re-admitted to Hosea's home, there to wait in penitence and grief the time of restoration to full favour. This was a clear picture of wayward Israel in its relationship with God, and showed the unending faithfulness of the immortal invisible Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life.

Uzziah: was the tenth King of Judah his name means Jehovah is strength. He ruled fifty-two years and won battles against the Edomites, Philistines, Arabians, and the Meunims, but pride filled his heart, and going into the Temple he determined to burn incense to the LORD, a duty to be performed only by the priest. The chief priest, Azariah, with eighty priests went into the Temple to reason with him, but because of his self-will he would not listen and God struck him with leprosy which stayed with him until his death.

Jotham: was a king of Judah. He began to reign just about the time when Isaiah began his great ministry (Isaiah 6:1) and was probably influenced by that godly man, and perhaps by Hosea and Micah as well. He had victory over the Ammonites, who were forced to pay him heavy tribute, and he himself was a great builder, fortifying several places in Judah and building the upper gate of the Temple.

Ahaz: was the twelve king of Judah.

Sins of Ahaz: early in his reign Ahaz walked in the way of the kings of Israel, he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree (2 Kings 16:3-4). Following his meeting with Tiglath-pileser in Damascus, Ahaz sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus which conquered him, and he said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me." He cut the Temple vessels in pieces, closed the doors of the Temple made altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and made high places to burn incense to other gods in the cities of Judah.

Hezekiah: means Jehovah has strengthened (he was a good king of Judah) one of the first acts of Hezekiah was to destroy the idolatrous altars and high places and cleanse the Temple. During the reign of Hezekiah the Assyrian king Sargon destroyed Samaria (the ten tribes of Israel) and deported the people to Assyria, later Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded the land of Judah (the two tribes) and by military conquest forced the nation into submission to Assyria. Assyria compelled Judah to pay heavy tribute and later decided to destroy Jerusalem, but God saved the city by sending a sudden plague which in one night killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

Jeroboam1: when Israel was split following the death of Solomon, Jeroboam became the head of the ten tribes in the land of Samaria and founded the Northern Kingdom of Israel afraid that if his people went annually to Jerusalem to worship and would be won back to the house of David, he established worship centers at two extremities of his kingdom, one at Dan in the North and another at Bethel in the South. His disobedience became much greater when, in defiance of the commandment forbidding the worship of God by means of images, he set up a golden calf in each of the new sanctuaries and quoted to the people the words of Aaron, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28).

The mass of people conformed to Jeroboam's new religious ways. This was the "sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin." The introduction of the golden bulls led to the baalization of the religion of Jehovah. Jeoboam 2 followed in the ways of Jeroboam 1 and in about two-hundred years the moral and religious corruption of the people had gone so far that there was no more hope for them, and God brought in a heathen power (Assyria) to lead them into captivity. During Jeroboam's reign the prophets Hosea, Joel, Jonah, and Amos spoke to the people.

Joash: was a king of Israel, his name means, Jehovah has given or come to help. Although Joash worshiped the two calves at Bethel and Dan, he had a high regard for Elisha the prophet, who told him that he was to gain three victories over the Syrians. Amaziah, the king of Judah, forced Joash (king of Israel) into a battle, in which Joash was victorious. When he died, he was succeeded by his son Jeroboam 2.

God tells Hosea to take a Prostitute for a Wife.

Hosea 1:2 ----- ²When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."

Israel is regarded as the spouse of Jehovah, (married to one God), but they are praying to idols, figuratively whoredom in this context refers to the Jewish people who are committing spiritual adultery by seeking the counsel of pagan gods. The LORD is going to use the life of Hosea, his prostitute wife and their children as a simple and visible symbol to depict the corrupt state of Israel and their adulterous relationship to the LORD their God.

Hosea takes Gomer as his Wife who Gives Birth to a Son Named "Jezreel."

Hosea 1:3-5 ----- ³So he (Hosea) went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I

will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵And on that day (the day the LORD punishes Israel) I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

Hosea's first Son was named, "Jezreel" a symbol of Israel and a symbol of the judgment God is about to pour out on Israel (the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom).

Jehu: was the tenth king of Israel, he ordered that the heads of Ahab's seventy sons be placed in heaps at the gate of Jezreel and denounced Joram (Ahab's son) and killed him and did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam.

Jezreel: was a town of Judah.

The valley of Jezreel: from Jezreel there was a splendid view of the plain reaching toward the Jordan in the Old Testament the valley of Jezreel is applied to this valley, and not to the great plain immediately N of Carmel which is better known as the Plain of Esdraelon or the Plain of Megiddo.

Gomer gives Birth to a Daughter Named, "No Mercy."

Hosea 1:6-7 ----- ⁶She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. ⁷But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen."

Hosea's daughter was named, "No Mercy" a symbol of Israel she was named No Mercy because God will have no more mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them.

NOTICE: the LORD tells Hosea that He will have mercy on Judah and save them without using a "Bow, sword or by war or by horses and horsemen," referring to weapons of war. This is referring to the Angel of the LORD destroying the Assyrian army. After Assyria had taken Israel captive they attempted to invade the city of Jerusalem: -

- It came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. ³⁶So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. (2 Kings 19:35-36).

The LORD had mercy on Judah and saved them from the fierce armies of Assyria without using weapons of war. These verses shine a spotlight on the truth that God does not need armies or weapons of war to conquer his people's enemies. Carried in the prophetic and comforting words of Hosea, "God will have mercy on the house of Judah, and save them," is a very faint echo of the Lord Jesus Christ who will also save Jerusalem without warfare when he returns in glory. These exciting echoes get louder and clearer as we progress through Hosea's prophetic words.

Gomer gives Birth to a Son Named, "Not My People."

Hosea 1:8-9 ----- ⁸When she (Gomer) had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹And the LORD said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God."

Hosea's second son was named, "Not My People" a symbol of Israel to show that God had rejected His people.

The Children of Israel shall be Like the Sand of the Sea.

Hosea 1:10-11 ----- ¹⁰Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God." ¹¹And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Jezreel: represents Israel.

The place where it was said, "You are not My People," refers to Israel's own land. The LORD gives Israel a promise that after they have been punished without mercy, a day will come when they will be gathered together and once again be established in their own land.

Great will be the day of Jezreel: means great will be the day when the people of Israel turn to God and He turns to them.

Judah and Israel will be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head: (v11). In a limited sense this was fulfilled after Israel's seventy year captivity in Babylon when Israel and Judah triumphantly returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem.

The LORD uses secular nations: kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. In the Old Testament God called Babylon His servant (Jer. 25:8-9) and used King Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of Babylon to bring judgment on Judah and Israel. Many times God through the prophets warned Israel that they would be destroyed by Assyria and Judah was constantly warned that they would be taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years, because of their rebellion against the LORD, but God would look after them while held captive and at the end of the seventy years He would deliver them.

The foreboding prophetic words of Hosea were fulfilled through Assyria and Babylon: the fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods and were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

Now here is the good news: while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again)

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

The prophetic words of Hosea, "Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head (v11) and his entire message carries an echo of the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea (Hosea 1:10) in a limited sense this refers to Israel and Judah being gathered together after their return from their seventy years under Babylonian rule, multitudes of Jews returned from the many nations they had been scattered amongst because of the invasion of Assyria and Babylon. But when it is understood that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ and that all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ and embrace all those who belong to Christ (Jews and Gentiles) it can be clearly seen that the ultimate fulfilment of Hosea's prophetic words, "The number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered" (Hosea 1:10) apply to the global body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles worldwide.

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word

of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. Its beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

End.