

HOSEA

Chapter Eleven

11/22/20

Chapter ten ended with a graphic picture of Israel's defeat by Assyria. Chapter eleven opens with a note of love and remembrance from God. (The New King James reads too closely to the King James. So, for a little more "common language" I'll use the Holeman again.)

Read Chapter 11

Verse 1 – When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

These words are quoted by Matthew and applied to Jesus (Matt 2:15).

Israel and Jesus were alike in that both were the objects of the love of the Father, both were called "My son", and both were in Egypt.

- But Israel proved to be an ungrateful son who insulted God by acts of immorality, idolatry, and indifference.
- Like any disobedient son, Israel needed chastening. So, in His great love, God disciplined the way-ward nation in order to restore it to a loving relationship with Himself.
- Not unlike the way in which we interact with our own children.
- From the moment God chose Abraham, He was building a nation; a people unto Himself. He sent 70 souls into Egypt when Joseph was still alive.
- God kept them safely tucked away in Egypt until that 70 souls had grown to half a million or more people.
- He kept them together and when He was ready, He called His son out of Egypt.
- Both Israel (70 souls) and Jesus went to Egypt for protection. Israel because of the famine in Canaan during the days of Joseph and Jesus, because of Herod's threat to kill the children two years old and under in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.
- Hosea's statement is a historical reference to Israel's physical redemption from Egypt.
- Matthew's statement refers to Jesus the Redeemer who provides spiritual redemption from the bondage of sin and eternal death.
- Unlike Jesus, who responded to God's every command like a faithful son, Israel responded to God's love like a way-word son.
- To correct Israel's sinful ways, God sent prophet after prophet to *plead* with the nation to repent and return to the LORD.
- **Verse 2** – *The more they called them, the more they departed from Me. They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offering to idols.*
 - The more God called, the more Israel rejected Him *and* rebelled against His love.
 - Turning a deaf ear to God's prophets the nation chose to practice idolatry instead.
 - Just like a loving father, God cared tenderly for the nation during its journey through the wilderness after its harsh slavery in Egypt.

Verse 3-4 – ³ *It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them in My arms, but they never knew that I healed them.* ⁴ *I led them with human cords, with ropes of kindness. To them I was like one who eases the yoke from their jaws; I bent down to give them food.*

- How tender and touching is the scene before us. The LORD took Israel by the arm to guide it over obstacles so that it would not stumble and get hurt. When Israel fell during times of testing or disobedience, God was there to heal their wounds.
- We are given the picture of a herdsman who cares for his heifer. He repositions the yoke's strap under the ox's jaw, enabling the animal to eat its food with ease.
- The herdsman bends down and tenderly feeds the animal a handful of grain.
- God did not lead Israel as if it were a dumb animal, with ropes and halters.
- He guided Israel with cords of tenderness, kindness, and love.
- Continuously and with great compassion He eased the nation's strain.
- Now, was Israel perfect little children through all of this? Heaven's no! And it cost them when they disobeyed.
- But, for forty long years, God graciously provided food and water for Israel during its wilderness wanderings.
- Israel, like an ungrateful son, was more than willing to enjoy God's generous gifts and gracious love, but Israel took God for granted, disobeying His commands and disregarding His will.
- Although God is long suffering, His patience does have limits. As any good father should, He had to correct Israel for its ingratitude and rebellion.
- Why do we discipline our children? Not to punish but to teach.
- Egypt symbolizes the new type of exile Israel would face in Assyria. Since there was no longer a king in Israel, the nation would be under Assyrian control and whichever king reigned at the time.

Verse 6 – *A sword will whirl through his cities; It will destroy and devour the bars of his gates, because of their schemes.*

- Destruction would come on Israel because it prayed to Canaanite deities for deliverance from Assyria rather than praying to the LORD.

Verse 7 – *My people are bent on turning from Me. Though they call to Him on high, He will not exalt them at all.*

- No one in Israel heeded the prophet's message because sin had lured the nation into a deep moral apathy (a lack of interest or concern).
- The law of Moses required that every rebellious son who would not obey his father or heed his reprimand be put to death (Dt. 21:18-21). Israel was such a son.
- The nation flaunted God's love, took for granted God's mercy and compassion, ignored the many warnings of judgement, and deserved to be annihilated.
- But God loved His covenant people and therefore He would not annihilate them nor would He abandon them entirely.

- His great love is reflected in four rhetorical questions:

Verse 8 *How can I give you up Ephraim? How can I surrender you, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? I have had a change of heart; My compassion is stirred!*

- Admah and Zeboiim were cities that were annihilated with Sodom and Gomorrah when God rained fire and brimstone on them (Dt. 29:22-23). (class look it up)
- Although Israel deserved the same fate as these cities listed, God turned from His fierce anger to show Israel (His son) mercy and compassion.
- David Levy says, God has an eternal relationship with Israel. He chose Israel, called it, cared for it, and chastens it when necessary. And it is not His divine purpose to destroy it or let anyone else destroy it.

Verse 9 – *I will not vent the full fury of My anger; I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not man, the Holy One among you; I will not come in rage.*

- Though His judgement against Israel will be severe, it will not obliterate them. God will keep His covenant with Israel which guarantee its continued existence into the Millennium, when the Messiah will rule and reign a converted nation for a thousand years.
- No one can question God's actions, why? *For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst.*
- God always does what is just and right, whether it is understood or not.
- He is, after all, the measuring stick for truth, justice, holiness and righteousness. There is no higher place to go.
- Abruptly, the subject switches to a future time when God will summon Israel back to the land for the Kingdom blessing of the Abrahamic covenant.

Verse 10 – *They will follow the LORD; He will roar like a lion. When He roars, His children will come trembling from the west.*

- Hosea uses a number of metaphors to express Israel's return. In the past, God destroyed Israel like a roaring lion (Hosea 5:14). In the future, He will call Israel back to its land with His roar.

Verse 11 – *They will be roused like birds from Egypt and like doves from the land of Assyria. Then I will settle them in their homes.*

During the return they shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria.

No longer will Israel be like a silly dove, flittering around in confusion. It will be like a dove flying home, trembling with excitement as it returns in haste to its nest.

- In the future, the people of Israel will return swiftly to their land, from every corner of the world, to experience God's blessing in the Millennial Kingdom.
- This promise is affirmed by the words, *says the LORD. (KJV)*

Verse 12 – *Ephraim surrounds me with lies, the house of Israel, with deceit. Judah still wanders with El and is faithful to holy ones.*

- The chapter ends with God representing Himself as a man enveloped by Israel's sins.
- *Ephraim has encircled me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit...*
- Hosea had exposed Israel's unfaithfulness and hypocrisy through its lies and deceit.
- The nation had pretended to worship Jehovah (the Holy One) while practicing idolatry,
- Some controversy arises over the meaning of the last part of verse 12. *Judah still wanders with El and is faithful to holy ones.*
- *David Levy explains that although the KJ and the NKJ versions contrast Israel's faithfulness and insincerity with Judah's faithfulness, the Jewish scriptures render verse 12 differently, showing Judah as defiant also.*
- *The Hebrew word "rud" translated ruleth (KJ), means "to wander restlessly" or "to be unruly" against God.* The word El means God.
- *Judah, despite its privileges (Temple, priesthood, covenant promises), was like a restless, unruly animal that cast off all restraints and wandered away.*
- We need to remember that although there were a very few good kings in Judah (Southern Kingdom) there weren't very many.
- In the Northern Kingdom (Israel) there was not one good king in the entire history of the nation.
- And, 136 years after the Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom, Babylon captures the Southern Kingdom-for the same reasons.
- Bottom Line: God faithfully keeps His covenant promises of redemption and restoration to "the saints" in both Israel and Judah.
- Likewise, God will bring redemption and restoration to a generation of Jewish people who will come to Him in repentance.
- In the Kingdom age, Israel's sorrow will turn to joy as the once way-word son experiences spiritual renewal through God's loving compassion.
- Always, God leaves His children with a promise at the end of the storm.
- Has He stayed with you through your life; always there at the end of the storm?