

HOSEA: LOOKING BEYOND JUDGMENT TO RESTORATION

XVI: God's Gracious Longsuffering Toward Israel

(Hosea 11:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. God's punishment is very painful, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12:11.
- B. This was the theme of Hosea, the "death-bed prophet of Israel" and the last prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel before it fell to Assyria in divine judgment. (ESV Introduction to Hosea)
- C. Hosea 11:1-11 describes God's gracious longsuffering toward Israel, giving hope on God's grace for His wayward people, so we view it for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. God's Gracious Longsuffering Toward Israel, Hosea 11:1-11.

- A. In Hosea 11:1-4, God recalled how much He had enjoyed working with Israel when she was a new nation, much like a parent works with his small toddler child:
 - 1. God expressed how he had loved the nation in its childhood, that He had called His son Israel to come out of Egypt during the days of the Exodus, Hosea 11:1.
 - 2. However, the more they were called by the Lord, the more they went away from Him in their devotion, and they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to false idols, Hosea 11:2.
 - 3. However, God recalled that it was **He** (the first person pronoun '**Anoki** for "I Myself" is emphatic, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 906; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 59) who had taught Ephraim, the Northern Kingdom of Israel, to walk, that He had held them up by their arms as they tottered along learning how to walk, but Ephraim did not know that He was the One Who had healed them, Hosea 11:3.
 - 4. God said He had led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, that He had become to them as One Who eases the yoke off of them, that He had bent down to them and fed them, Hosea 11:4 NIV.
- B. However, because they refused to repent, they would certainly return as it were to Egypt from which God had called them in that they would surely go into captivity to Assyria with Assyria ruling over them, Hosea 11:5.
- C. The sword of the Assyrians would rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates and devour them because of their plans to turn from the Lord, for Israel was determined to turn from Him, Hosea 11:6-7a. Indeed, even if they called unto the Most High for help, God would not at all exalt them, Hosea 11:7b.
- D. Nevertheless, God as Israel's loving Parent was deeply torn over His punishment of Israel, noting that He could not give them up as His own, Hosea 11:8:
 - 1. God rhetorically asked how could He give Ephraim up, and how could He hand him over in judgment, 8a.
 - 2. The Lord asked how could He treat Israel like Admah and Zeboiim, cities annihilated along with Sodom and Gomorrah when God rained fire and brimstone down upon the cities of the Jordan plain, Hosea 11:8b with Deuteronomy 29:23; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Hosea 11:8.
 - 3. Accordingly, God announced that His heart recoiled within Him just thinking about Israel's punishment, that His compassion for him as His son from Israel's childhood grew warm and tender, Hosea 11:8c.
- E. Accordingly, God in grace would restore Israel so that the nation would truly follow Him, Hosea 11:9-11:
 - 1. The Lord said that He would not execute His burning anger so as to destroy Ephraim again, for He was God and not a man, the Holy One in their midst, that He would not come in wrath, Hos. 11:9. The phrase "For I am God . . ." uses the emphatic pronoun '**Anoki** again, but here after the word '**El** for **Elohim**, so the sentence literally reads, "For **Creator God** I Myself am . . ." to indicate that He **as God** was **infinitely gracious** where a man would not be as gracious as God with such a rebellious son! (Ibid., Kittel, p. 907)
 - 2. In the latter days after Israel had faced the refining fire of the Great Tribulation Period, the people would follow the Lord: He would roar like a lion, and when He roared, His children of Israel would come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves that head straight to their home nests they would come from Assyria, and God would return them to their homes, Hosea 11:10-11; B. K. C., O. T., p. 1403.

Lesson: *Though God would severely punish Israel for turning from Him unto false gods, since God was attached in His commitment to Israel as if she were His son with whom He had worked since Israel's childhood, He would not desert him. Rather, due to His infinite grace, God would refine the nation and restore Israel to his homeland, repentant and submissive to the Lord's will in the future Messianic Kingdom.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice that God is infinitely gracious with His people, that He will not desert them over their sin. (2) This also teaches that the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, the Premillennial view of prophecy.*