The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 11**

* **11:1-4– A Father Caring for His Son**
* **Verse 1**– If the word beauty can be used in the midst of talk concerning judgment and destruction, then it is used here. This is one of the most beautiful sections of Hosea because it illustrates God’s love for His children as a father cares for his son.
* This is the third time God speaks of Israel’s early days or their past (cf. Hos. 9:10; 10:1). As a youth God loved and cared for Israel so much and such love is demonstrated through the incredible exodus from Egypt (Ex. 1-15; 4:22). God’s incredible acts in the land of Egypt constituted the basis for which the OT speaks of His undying and unwavering love for His people (Deut. 32:6; Isa. 1:2; Jer. 3:19; Ezek. 16:1-14).
* Part of the verse forms a prophecy which Matthew quotes in Matt. 2:15. There Matthew speaks of Jesus’ brief sojourning in Egypt while Herod was killing all the male babies in Bethlehem and its vicinity. Why does Matthew quote from Hos. 11:1 and apply it to Jesus?
* As God delivered Israel (His son, children) from bondage in Egypt, so will God through Jesus deliver the true Israel (God’s people, His son) from bondage (sin) through His death and resurrection on the cross after He Himself was delivered from Herod’s death command. Jesus embodies the true Israel (Jn. 15:1) and thus He will impart salvation to all nations. The passage in Hosea is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus in its greatest sense as God delivers us from the greatest from of slavery which is sin (Rom. 6:6).
* **Verse 2**– The “they” in this verse is to be understood as a reference to the prophets. God sent prophet after prophet to speak to His people concerning His will. When they would not listen, He would warn them. And when they failed to heed the warning He told of destruction. God did everything He could for them in His love yet they repaid Him with ingratitude (2 Kings 17:13-15; cf. Matt. 11:20-30; 12:38-42).
* Israel loved her idols instead of God. Selfishness was more important to them than returning the love God had shown to her. She served Baals and offered incense to their idols consistently and joyfully (Num. 25; Judg. 2:13; 3:7; 10:6; Hos. 2:13; 4:13). Idolatry may be seen as more suitable since it satisfies the flesh and offers a quick reward. The ultimate results, however, are permanent scars.
* **Verses 3-4**– These verses now invite the attention of parents who have trained their young children to take their first steps. God is pictured in v. 3 as a father who is overjoyed and seeking to teach his son to walk for the first time. He was there for them since the beginning and held their hand every step of the way (Deut. 1:31; 32:10-11).
* He held them in His arms and when they were sick He healed them. When they thirsted, He gave them water. When they were hungry, He fed them. God did everything in His power to love and care for Israel (Isa. 41:10). But even though He did all this, they did not know Him (Hos. 2:8; Jer. 4:22; Rom. 1:20-22).
* In v. 4, God’s love is pictured as cords that would usually draw an animal to work or obedience. This is not a forceful love or coercing of love but rather a romantic and convincing love that God employs to His children (Sngs. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:14). He “woos” them.
* God took their burdens away and eased their pain and suffering which reference their time in Egypt (Lev. 26:13). He even went so far as to bend them and feed them as a parent does with a young child (Psa. 78:23-25; 105:40). God went and above and beyond for His people. Have they even remotely come close to reciprocating the love?
* **11:5-7– Assyria will be their King**
* **Verse 5**– God will send Israel back into captivity and bondage but it won’t be in Egypt. It will be in Assyria. They have rejected Him as their King (1 Sam. 8:7-8; 12:12, 17) and their selfishness and self-righteousness will lead them to the king of Assyria. Israel repeatedly pleaded for a king and ultimately they will get one they did not bargain for (1 Sam. 12:20-21, 24-25; Hos. 7:16; Amos 5:27).
* **Verse 6**­– The action that the sword carries out is translated differently in some versions depending on the translation (fall, rage, remain). The proper meaning is that it will whirl or make its rounds about the cities. It will sweep over every place until all their defenses and securities are shattered (Deut. 28:52; 32:25; Lam. 2:9) because they rejected the love of God (Ecc. 9:13-18). They trusted in their men and not God (Psa. 106:43; Hos. 10:6).
* **Verse 7**– The people are bent on their ways and their sins. The proper meaning is one who is fastened tightly to something or to cling to something so tightly such that it cannot get loose. Israel was so bent on their sin and turning away from God that they could not think about anything else (Jer. 3:6-7; 8:5). They were truly trapped in its power (Gen. 4:7; Heb. 3:13). The “they” here in this verse is once again the prophets who call upon to people to exalt God and turn to Him but there is no positive response.
* **11:8-11– How can I give you up?**
* **Verse 8**– This section points us towards the future and a time in which there will be peace and reconciliation with God. With this in mind, God is turned over within Himself concerning the execution and destruction of His people. He is pictured in an extreme emotional state because of His love for the people. He does not want to destroy them but His holiness demands such (Lam. 3:33).
* A similar construction of the phrase *“How can I”* is repeated 4 times in the verse. Admah and Zeboiim were cities of the plain that were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 14:8; 19:25; Deut. 29:23). The last thing God wants to do is to repeat an incident such as Sodom and Gomorrah. He does not delight in destroying of His people but His holiness demands judgment (Matt. 23:37).
* The reason God does not look to completely abandon the people altogether is because of His heart and compassion (His great love). There is an “overthrow” occurring in His heart because He wants to save and rescue but the people’s sin won’t allow it (2 Pet. 3:9).
* **Verse 9**­– As such a decision is made by God that Ephraim will not be destroyed again. This is not speaking of the current impending destruction but instead God is speaking of spiritual Israel. He is looking ahead into the future. His reason for this is because He is God and not man (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Isa. 55:8-9; Mal. 3:6).
* God is not quick to wrath and anger as we are in selfishness and spontaneity. He is patient and slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness (Neh. 9:17). When He decides destruction should take place it will be because He has done everything He can to save and He will have given us every opportunity to be saved.
* **Verse 10**– In these future days Ephraim will walk after the LORD (Hos. 2:18-20; 3:5) which indicates a renewed intimacy between God and His people. God will roar as a lion indicating the sounding forth of His word and will and many will come trembling before Him (sign of reverence, fear and respect). God will open up His kingdom for all nations (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8) and those who fear the roar will walk with Him.
* **Verse 11**– The acceptance of all nations and all people across the earth continues with the use of Egypt (south) and Assyria (east). Those who come trembling before Him will truly be His sons (Isa. 66:2; cf. Hos. 11:1-4). In these days God’s love will be reciprocated. There will be peace and a firm foundation (their houses; Matt. 7:24-27) established by God.
* It must be understood that these things are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus through His death and resurrection. Thus, the importance of v. 2 is readily seen in the entirety of this chapter and human history. Jesus would take away our sins and we would then be reconciled with God if we heed the roar (2 Cor. 5:14-21). As such we can truly experience the blessing of being the true Israel and God’s children (Rom. 9:23-26; Gal. 3:26-29).