

Women in the Word
Minor Prophets

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Hosea 11:1-12:14

Throughout Hosea, Ephraim was stuck between their towering God and a forest of threats, trying to avoid the only path that would fulfill them and award them security and rest.

They found themselves facing annihilation “Between the Rock and Hard Places”

The Scene

Ephraim was sitting pretty in the meadow of ill-gained prosperity while ;

- One hand was patting themselves on the back
- One hand was stealing
- Another hand was shaking the enemies hand
- And yet another was creating and worshipping idol

The View

They were looking everywhere except toward God, the formidable “ Rock” above them which was teetering toward judgement upon them. From that great shadow, they only looked away while anxiously scheming to placate the encroaching predators, Egypt and Assyria.

Hosea, by his life story and God’s word through him is sounding the alarm.

Will these children, immature, silly doves wake up to mercy or doom?!

The Trial / Family Crisis

The Defendant: Ephraim, Israel, God’s Adopted Beloved Son

The Plaintiff: Yahweh, Holy Sovereign Creator God - BOTH Prosecutor and Perfect Judge

The Witness and Jury: Hosea, Prophet of God

The Charge and Conviction —Treason

Ephraim has turned away from God.

“ Israel has forgotten its maker!” v.8:14

Like Jacob when he wrestled the Angel of the Lord at Bethel, the

- The nation of Israel has gone after everything from God except God himself.
- They submitted themselves to pagan spiritual bondage.
- Obsessed with **Egypt and Assyria** (self-preservation, prosperity at all cost, feared them instead of God).

Why, in their/our fearful predicaments do we not remember the exodus or cry to God as David did in Psalm 142 ?!

“...you know my way...you are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living...bring me out of prison that I may give thanks to your name”.

Look back and LEARN!

Case History: Hosea 11 Begins

- Here begins a wonderful chain of mercies, each line a rare jewel!” -C.H. Spurgeon

Defendant’s Background : BELOVED, ADOPTED SON(s)

- *“ When Israel was a child, I loved him”. V.1*
- God’s choice was free and affectionate. Special grace had written the name of Israel on God’s heart.
- They were given **LOVE and SONSHIP**. As believers, we are the SAME.

As **ADOPTED** they are (we are):

- but ashes imbued with unspeakable dignity
- recipients of covenant provision in the present and a guaranteed
- future of eternity with God.

“ To be indeed born into the family of God is a dignity to which the descendant of an imperial prince bears no more comparison than a spark in the tinder to the sun of the heavens”. C.H.Spurgeon

As **CALLED** they are (we are):

- God’s call both entreats and enables.

- called out of Egypt
- called out as a remnant set apart for protection and a purpose

God told Moses to say to Pharaoh *“Israel is my firstborn son... let my son go that he may serve me”*.

“And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified “. Romans 8:30

God as Father **NURTURED and TAUGHT and LED** his young son Ephraim.

He humbled himself and bent down lovingly to his child;

“I took them up in my arms...”

“I taught Ephraim to walk...” God trained them for their ultimate with him.

He gave them a humble, loyal leader in Moses.

They were like naive doves without God’s ever presence.

God **HEALED** them:

- They were physically and spiritually protected during the forty
- years in the wilderness.
- They were disciplined for their eternal benefit.
- They were **healed** in ways they had yet to understand or fully
- appreciate.
- They were made to depend on God for everything—— a lesson
- we are still trying to learn.

God **FED** them:

- Ephraim had never been in want.
- Everything he needed for sustenance was provided from the
- Father: manna, quail, water from the living rock, his holy
- presence and guidance in the pillar of cloud by day and fire by
- night, law and government, instruction for life and worship, and
- the fruitfulness of children.

God gave them **SABBATH REST**:

- He promised them a home
- He promised them righteousness —with the provision of the perfect sacrifice
- With “ cords of kindness and bands of love” he compelled and encouraged them in the right direction

- He kept them in safety
 - He was patient and fore bearing and knew their physical and intellectual limits
- God gave them his **COVENANT**, it's **PRIVILEGES** and its **RESPONSIBILITIES**.

“Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD disciplines you”.

Sentence Pronounced

Fact: “ *My people are bent on turning away from me*”.

Be VERY AFRAID: “ *...and though they call out to the Most High, he shall NOT raise them up AT ALL*”. v. 11:7

The consequences for this type of disobedience are SEVERE, possibly FATAL.
They will suffer invasion by Assyria.

Military Destruction “SWORD”

- Fortresses, symbols of self-reliance, lies, oppression, and deceptions
- Palaces, centers of religious and political scheming
- “Bars of gates consumed”—Bars may be persons rather than things like oracle priests giving false advice

Captivity- Military plans outside of God were doomed.

Seductive calls of the Baals were listened to rather than God

Punishment of the People

- Enemy would have full rights to slaughter, exile, enslave, or sell into slavery

Admah and Zeboiim two neighboring cities to Sodom and Gomorrah were given as examples

- Destroyed by persistent sin
- Not even rubble remains

...BUT WAIT!!!

Hear the Deafening Pounding of the Father’s Heart...

Like a drum beat each phrase swells with anguish and passion...

“How can I give you up , O Ephraim (my son)?

How can I hand you over, O Israel (my son)?

How can I make you like Admah and Zeboiim?”

“When God can see nothing in man to show him mercy, God searches his own heart and finds his OWN LOVE as the reason.

It is not what he is, but what I AM that decides the case”. C.H. Spurgeon

The Father’s Compassion Wins! Burning anger and cold wrath melts with the most tender affection...

“ I will not again destroy Ephraim for I am God not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath”.

This is made possible by the ultimate love gift, Jesus Christ, the only one who could reconcile God’s absolute justice and his overarching love.

The Sentence is not DEATH. There is a miraculous
Stay of Execution. Extravagant Mercy!

The Lion Roars

“ They shall go after the LORD; he will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like the birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares the LORD”.

At the lion’s roar you immediately understand its strength and your vulnerability.

This Roar of the Lion of God:

- Calls everyone to ATTENTION
- Proclaims God’s Sovereign power
- Commands ultimate respect
- Insists on obedience
- Warns “ ***He is not safe, but he is GOOD***”.

The Silly Doves Come Trembling

- The LORD, God gives them the power and the reason to come back to Him, their home.
- They turn to him- “*remember him*”.
- Repent of lying, oppression, self-worship, ingratitude, greed,
- and perversion
- Hold fast to love and justice

- Depend fully on the Father, His leading and provision

The Power of Love

Song by Huey Lewis

*The power of love is a curious thing, make one weep, make another man sing
Change a hawk to a little white dove, more than a feeling, that's the power of love
Tougher than diamonds, rich like cream, stronger and harder than a bad girl's dream
Make a bad one good, make a wrong one right, the power of love will keep you home at night*

*You don't need money, you don't need fame, don't need no credit card to ride this train
It's strong and it's sudden and it's cruel sometimes, but it might just save your life
That's the power of love, that's the power of LOVE*

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