

# HOSEA'S EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE

**BIBLE TEXT** : Hosea 11:1-12; 14:1-9.

LESSON 331 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein" (Hosea 14:9).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Hosea 11:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

<sup>3</sup> I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

<sup>4</sup> I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

<sup>5</sup> He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.

<sup>6</sup> And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour *them*, because of their own counsels.

<sup>7</sup> And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt *him*.

<sup>8</sup> How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

<sup>9</sup> I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

<sup>10</sup> They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **I God's Reminder of Israel's deliverance Out of Egypt**

1. God's love brought the Israelites out of bondage, Hosea 11:1.
2. Israel departed to the worship of Baal, Hosea 11:2;

#### **1 Kings 18:18**

<sup>18</sup> And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

#### **1 Kings 18:21**

<sup>21</sup> And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

3. They were tenderly trained in the early years of their history, Hosea 11:3, 4;

#### **Deuteronomy 32:9-12**

<sup>9</sup> For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

<sup>10</sup> He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

<sup>11</sup> As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

<sup>12</sup> So the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

#### **Deuteronomy 1:31**

<sup>31</sup> And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.

### **II God's Reminder of Israel's Approaching Captivity**

1. The Assyrian would be their king if they returned not to the Lord, Hosea 11:5;

#### **2 Kings 17:22**

<sup>22</sup> For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

#### **2 Kings 17:23**

<sup>23</sup> Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

2. The sword would be upon them because of their backslidings, Hosea 11:6, 7.

3. God's tender compassion, even to backslidden Israel, is illustrated, Hosea 11:8;

#### **Psalms 103:13**

<sup>13</sup> Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

#### **Psalms 103:14**

<sup>14</sup> For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

4. In spite of the fierceness of His anger, God dealt mercifully with Israel, Hosea 11:9;

#### **Psalms 103:8**

<sup>8</sup> The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

#### **Psalms 103:9**

<sup>9</sup> He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his* anger for ever.

tremble from the west.

<sup>11</sup> They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.

<sup>12</sup> Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

### **Hosea 14:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

<sup>2</sup> Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

<sup>3</sup> Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

<sup>4</sup> I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

<sup>5</sup> I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

<sup>7</sup> They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive *as* the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon.

<sup>8</sup> Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard *him*, and observed him: I *am* like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

<sup>9</sup> Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

5. His promise of their eventual return is repeated, Hosea 11:10,11;

### **Deuteronomy 30:4**

<sup>4</sup> **If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:**

### **Deuteronomy 30:5**

<sup>5</sup> **And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.**

6. The difference between Israel and Judah at that time is shown, Hosea 11:12.

## **III God's Call to Repentance**

1. God tenderly and earnestly pled with Israel, Hosea 14:1, 2;

### **Matthew 23:37**

<sup>37</sup> **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!**

2. Sincere confession was expected of Israel, Hosea 14:3;

### **Proverbs 28:13**

<sup>13</sup> **He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.**

3. Israel's restoration was conditioned on their repentance, Hosea 14:4-8.

4. The wisdom of heartfelt repentance is shown, Hosea 14:9.

## **NOTES:**

### **Hosea, the Prophet**

Hosea the prophet was contemporary with Isaiah, the great prophet who wrote so much about the Messianic Kingdom. Hosea's prophecies were directed mostly to the kingdom of Israel, and Isaiah's were to the kingdom of Judah. Hosea is often called the weeping prophet to Israel; Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet to Judah. Hosea uses some of the most colourful statements that can be found in literature. Abrupt in his denunciation of the sins of Israel, he is equally as tender and appealing in his exhortation to repentance. He was gifted with a great force of expression and some of his passages are truly sublime. The ten tribes of Israel were sometimes called by the endearing name of Ephraim, and Hosea seemed to use that name often when referring to them.

### **Out of Bondage**

As the love of a parent for a child, was God's love for Israel. He loved Israel with such love and compassion that He brought them out of Egyptian bondage. That first love that sweeps into the soul of a repentant sinner, when he is redeemed from the hand of the enemy, is a little portion of the same love that God has for His children, and that He showed toward Israel.

God loved Israel and called them out of bondage. He loves the sinner and calls him to repentance. Just as truly as Israel served under hard task-masters in Egypt, the sinner serves under a hard task-master — the devil. Only God can break the bondage of sin and set the sinner free.

One night God led the Children of Israel out of Egypt, out from under the awful tyranny of Pharaoh. In a moment of time, Jesus can break the powers of Satan over a human life and set that person free from every evil habit that has him bound. It is the compassionate love of a merciful God that takes a sinner, condemned and unclean, and bestows upon him such tender love and affection as to call him His son. "Out of Egypt have I called my son" was literally true in Israel as well as being prophetically true — and completely fulfilled — in Christ.

### **Taught to Walk**

Jacob went down into Egypt for the preservation of his life and the lives of his family. Jesus was carried into Egypt for the preservation of His life from King Herod. But the Lord did not leave Israel or Christ there in the land of bondage. He called them out! Not only did the Lord bring Israel out of Egypt but He made use of every means to teach them to walk in the right and only safe way. The Holy Spirit is in the world today calling souls out of darkness into the light of the Gospel. God warned Israel of the many dangers and pitfalls, and guided them with His eye through untrodden places. He laid meat before them when they hungered. He fed them with manna — angel's food — but then Ephraim "waxed fat, and kicked."

### **Backsliding**

The Prophet Hosea was continually remonstrating with Israel because of their backslidings. He used such phrases as, "Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer"; "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone"; "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." These things tell very clearly Israel's spiritual condition. Despite all the blessings the Lord had bestowed upon them, they were bent to backsliding.

From the time that Aaron made the golden calf until the Israelites were finally taken as captives into Assyria and Babylon, there was a continual round of backsliding and repenting and backsliding again. When they prospered, their hearts became vain and lifted up. Then the Lord would let their enemies overwhelm them, and in their distress they would cry unto the Lord. God's mercies would be extended to them as they cried to Him, and then His blessings would follow. Thus, Israel is pictured as an adulterous wife, a people who forsook the true and living God and worshiped idols. The Bible states: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

### **An Exhortation to Repentance**

"O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou has fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." These are the pleadings of the Lord to a rebellious nation. These same pleadings are extended today in a personal sense to every wayward soul. One may have been tripped by the enemy, but the Lord says to him, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Jesus extended the invitation in these words "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Though God's judgements are pronounced against those who continue in sin, yet at the same time His arms of mercy are extended to those who will repent.

In this lesson God is saying to Israel, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Deeply implore God to take away all your sins! You are lost, helpless, desolate, and perishing without Him!

The Children of Israel would not "frame their doings" to turn unto God. Not only did they desire to walk contrary to God's way, but they were proud of their evil-doings. God said, through the Prophet Isaiah, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." God sees the heart of the one who in honesty and true purpose determines to turn from sin, and He comes to the help of that one.

### **The Yearnings of God for His People**

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?" These words were spoken from the yearning heart of a tender, compassionate, and merciful God. Jesus wept over Jerusalem and said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often

would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

It is Deity Himself pleading with men, bleeding for them, and opening His gracious arms of love to receive them back to Himself. Matchless love! How could they resist the wooings of such a Spirit?

"Only acknowledge thine iniquity" (Jeremiah 3:13). Have you made an idol of your own ways, your own thoughts? Have they prevented you from finding God's way? A person needs only to acknowledge that his way of life, whether it be in the vilest of sin or only in blindness and hardness of heart, has not brought the peace and assurance that he is longing for, and to ask God to show him His way. He finds God's way when he reads the Bible and listens to the preaching of the Bible with an open heart and an unprejudiced mind. God will show him His way of love, joy, peace, and gentleness; and as man's heart breaks before God, because of his own contrary ways, and he asks divine forgiveness, God will come to dwell with him. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). (**Psalm 34:18** <sup>18</sup> **The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.**)

### **Penitent Ephraim**

Hosea pictured what Ephraim would answer when his stubborn and rebellious heart was broken. Ephraim will say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" at last he has yielded! He falls a penitent soul at the foot of the Cross!

Hosea saw, through the eye of prophecy, the latter days when Israel would no longer worship idols. He foresaw the glorious time when the nation will be through with sin. God will be their God forever and they will be His people. They will render unto Him the "calves" of their lips, for the sacrifice of animals will no longer be offered. They will have found the Perfect Sacrifice — the Christ they once rejected. They will offer "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, . . . giving thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15).

### **God's Boundless Love**

Hear the answer of a loving, merciful God. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." What a beautiful picture! Every person has the privilege of being like that. What a blessed life for a person to live, when he can blossom as the lily and the fragrance from his everyday walk will be as ointment poured forth.

Hosea reproved, rebuked, and exhorted unstable Israel, and closed his sublime prophecy with these lofty words: "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Name a great prophet who was contemporary with Hosea.
2. By what endearing name was Israel sometimes called?
3. What was Israel's besetting sin?
4. When was Israel exalted as a nation?
5. Describe God's concern over backslidden Israel.
6. Can you quote the Lord's exhortation that they return?
7. Give some of Hosea's terse sayings.