

Finer Grounds

Hosea

Lesson 12: Chapters 11 & 12

Read Hosea 11:1-7

Throughout the book of Hosea, God has been portrayed as the loving husband seeking His bride. In these verses we get to see another side of our Lord. He is now depicted as the loving father.

List each of the things God has done for Israel according to Hosea 11:1-4.

This was an especially striking section for me this week because over the past few days my husband and I have been teaching my daughter, Makyla to walk. We celebrate each step with cheers and cover each bump with kisses. In Hosea 1:3, God is doing the same thing with Israel; He has led them out of Egypt and now will teach them how to stand on their own two feet.

According to 2 Kings 17:13-20, how did Israel behave in spite of these loving actions?

Unfortunately, once they got their balance they drifted away from their loving Lord. Now, this once precious and beloved child will fall into the hands of the Assyrian army. We fall into the same trap today, forsaking the one who rescued us out of the mud and

mire for worldly pleasures. We forget how utterly hopeless life would be without Christ.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, how are we to live?

We are given such emotionally powerful images throughout the book of Hosea: husband and wife, father and child. God wants us to understand how truly precious each and every one of us is to Him. He desires our complete love and devotion.

Read Hosea 11:8-11

Until I became a parent I never quite believed the line "It hurts me more than it hurts you." It seemed as if there was no way this was a possibility. Once I started disciplining my own beautiful daughters I realized how true this statement was. Even though I realize the importance of consistent discipline, I hate being the one to upset them or cause them pain; in fact, sometimes it actually brings tears to my eyes. I see the same emotion in this passage of scripture.

God knows the punishment He is about to impart and He hates it; He even says in Hosea 11:8: "My heart is turned over within Me." Because of this He will have compassion on the house of Israel. This doesn't mean that He will spare them completely from punishment, but He will have some level of mercy on them.

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According to Hosea 11:8, what two cities does the Lord not want to treat Israel like?

Read Deuteronomy 29:23 and describe what happened to these cities?

Because the Israelites were His chosen people, God would not wipe them completely off the Earth and destroy their land. Though they wouldn't necessarily view enemy captivity as an act of mercy, if they considered the power and capabilities of an almighty God, they would have understood this was an extremely compassionate act.

What other act of kindness will God grant to Israel after they have gone into captivity (Hosea 11:11)?

While they would never regain the power they once had, God would allow them to return to their homes. We see the fulfillment of this in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Read Hosea 11:12-12:8

The first verse in Hosea 12 is very poignant: "Ephraim feeds on wind, and pursues the east wind continually..." Imagine that you are hungry so you take a big bite of wind. How fulfilling would that be? Israel is constantly pursuing these things that they

think they want; however, like the wind, they won't bring them fulfillment.

I can't help but think of the various diets I've been on when I read through this section. It is like there is a big piece of chocolate cake on the counter. I know that I shouldn't eat it, but to me, this piece of cake looks like the most appealing and satisfying morsel in the whole world. However, after I eat the cake I realize I feel emotionally and physically sick. This delicious looking dessert brought me anything but fulfillment.

What are the things you are actively pursuing in your life (job, money, hobby, relationships, etc)?

Analyze each of these; once you have achieved them do you think they will bring you true fulfillment?

Some of these things may very well be wonderful things worth pursuing; for instance, if I am pursuing friendships with my fellow Christians this is another way to grow in my relationship with God. If I am putting energy into planning and planting a garden maybe this will allow me to share with others or even be a better steward of what God has blessed me with. However, what if my pursuits are bringing me further away from God? What if I am cultivating a relationship that isn't helping me grow toward God? What if my job is taking up so much of my life that I am unable to fulfill my obligations at home or with my

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church family? Be sure that your endeavors are not causing you to “feed on the wind.”

According to Hosea 12:8, to whom did Israel give credit for their wealth?

Once again we see the arrogance of the nation of Israel. Their prosperity has become their downfall.

Read Isaiah 29:15-16 and describe what is said about the potter and the clay?

How can we be sure to give all respect that is due to our sovereign God and creator?

While God desires our intimacy and love, he also commands our respect. He is the one who knitted you together in your mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13). He knows how many hairs are on your head (Luke 12:7). We should be sure that our reverence for God’s awesome power is apparent in our everyday life.

Read Hosea 12:9-12:14

In this final section of Hosea 12, God once again warns them that they would be going back into captivity.

What festival is being referred to in Hosea 12:9 and what was its purpose? (Hint: Deuteronomy 23:41-43)

The Israelites wouldn’t have to celebrate this feast anymore to remember their captivity. They would again experience it first-hand. They have disregarded the prophets that had spoken to them and forgotten the Law of Moses and their salvation from the land of Egypt. God had offered them salvation, yet they would not accept it; therefore, He would leave the guilt on them and they would have to suffer the consequences.

In today’s society, it is not uncommon for people to believe that there is a God and even to believe that the Bible is His word; however, many will not adhere to its teachings. By doing this, they are exactly like the Israelites: handing God back the salvation He has so graciously offered us. What an incredible insult! Those who do this will pay; God will “leave his bloodguilt on them.”