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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Hosea 11.

(2014)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Hosea 11.

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### Topics.

- When Israel was a child, the LORD loved him, and called him my son.
- The more Israel was called the more they turned away from the LORD.
- God taught Israel to walk and bent down to feed them with love.
- Israel will be taken captive to Assyria and their cities will be destroyed.
- God cries, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim my heart recoils within."
- The LORD will return Israel to their homes and never again destroy them.
- Israel has surrounded God with lies, but Judah is faithful to the Holy One.
- The Commonwealth of Israel.

**INTRODUCTION:** Hosea has been called the "death-bed prophet of Israel" because he was the last to prophesy before the Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria (about 722 B.C.). His ministry followed a golden age in the Northern Kingdom, with a peace and prosperity not seen since the days of Solomon. Unfortunately, this prosperity led to moral decay, and Israel forsook God to worship idols. So God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, whose unfaithfulness to her husband would serve as an example of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. Hosea then explained God's complaint against Israel and warned of the punishment that would come unless the people returned to the LORD and remained faithful to him. The book shows the depth of God's love for his people, a love that tolerates no rivals.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### When Israel was a Child, the LORD loved Him, and called Him My Son.

Hosea 11:1 ----- <sup>1</sup>When Israel was a child, I (the LORD) loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation.

God said: -

- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation: -

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4).
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Rom. 3:4).

- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Rom. 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Rom. 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)

See also (Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 26:18).

The Psalmist wrote: -

- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

**The thermometer of God's prophecy:** it is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being.

Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God. For further information concerning this new nation God is building in Christ see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel," at the end of this chapter.

### **The more Israel was Called the More they Turned Away from the LORD.**

Hosea 11:2 -----<sup>2</sup>The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols.

How tragic is this, when Israel was a child God loved them, but as they grew to adulthood they became grossly corrupt and turned from God who gave birth to them to idols and pagan gods even though God sent them faithful prophets.

**Baal:** means Lord, possessor, husband, since the Hebrew husband was regarded as the literal owner of his wife, Baal was the common term for husband. Most often however, the word refers to the Semitic deity or deities called Baal. Baal is not the name of one god, but the name of the presiding deity of any given locality. Because the worship of Baal was much the same everywhere in Canaan, in time Baal came to represent the idea of one god. The Baalim were believed to be the gods of the land, owning and controlling it and the increases of crops, fruits, and cattle was believed to be under their control. The farmer was completely dependent upon the Baalim. Some Baal's were believed to be in control of cities and some were considered greater than others.

The struggle between Baalism and Judaism came to a head on Mount Carmel when the Prophet Elijah met the priests of Baal and slew 450 of them. The cult quickly recuperated, however, and prospered until crushed by Jehu, but Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, the wife of Jehoram, gave the worship of Baal a new impulse. In the worship of Baal, incense and burnt sacrifices were offered to him and on extraordinary occasions the victims were children offered by their parents. Lascivious rites accompanied the worship.

Sometimes priests, dancing around the altar in a state of frenzy, slashed themselves with knives. At first the name Baal was used by the Jews for their God without discrimination, but as the struggle between the two religions developed, the name Baal was given up in Judaism as a thing of sham.

### **God taught Israel to Walk and bent Down to Fed them with Love.**

Hosea 11:3-4 ----- <sup>3</sup>Yet it was I (the LORD) who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. <sup>4</sup>I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them.

Deception is enormously powerful and the mind is easily deceived. Even though Israel embraced idols and the gods of the surrounding nations, God continued to bless their farms, their cattle, their crops and even their woman in childbearing, but the people of Israel gave their idols and Baal's the credit for their prosperity. It is enormously difficult for the human mind and logic to understand why Israel would turn from such a loving and powerful God. But one of the main reasons people turn from God to other concepts of god (created by false teaching and man's imagination) is simply because the other gods they turn to do not have any rules, laws or moral attachments. Israel was free to have temple prostitutes and religious orgies etc., they could have a god and indulge the flesh at the same time.

Jesus clearly understood this principal when he said: -

- Because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. (Matt. 24:12).

### **Israel will be taken Captive to Assyria and their Cities will be Destroyed.**

Hosea 11:5-7 ----- <sup>5</sup>They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me. <sup>6</sup>The sword shall rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them because of their own counsels. <sup>7</sup>My people are bent on turning away from me, and though they call out to the Most High, he shall not raise them up at all.

The LORD uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. The following shows how brilliantly God used Assyria to bring judgment on Israel and Babylon to bring judgment on Judah. Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) had set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets and turned to other gods so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them.

The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods and were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

**Now here is the good news:** while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed

Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

**God cries, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim My heart recoils within."**

Hosea 11:8 ----- <sup>8</sup>How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.

**Ephraim:** became such a leader in the new Northern Kingdom (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) that in addition to their more common name Israel, the kingdom is also called Ephraim. The Canaanites of Gezer lived in the midst of the ten tribes, because they did not drive them out of the land. Ephraim's territory included worship centers at Bethel and Shiloh.

**Admah:** was a city near Zeboiim, destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Zeboiim:** was a city near Admah, destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah.

**NOTICE:** God's emotional struggle to give up Israel, for God this is heart-wrenching, He is about to give up the son he brought to birth and loved and cared for. The emotion expressed in the words, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?" is the same emotion an earthly father would feel who loved his son, but had to hand him over to the justice system of our world because the son had broken so many laws and turned away from his father's counsel and refused to heed his warnings.

No one has seen God or knows His form since He is Spirit, but as we read the Bible from cover to cover it becomes very clear He has a father's heart and is very protective of His children. The LORD knows that by giving Israel over to Assyria and Judah over to Babylon they will be as the cities of Admah and Zeboiim which were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah and it deeply grieves His heart.

**The LORD will return Israel to their Homes and Never Again Destroy Them.**

Hosea 11:9-11 ----- <sup>9</sup>I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. <sup>10</sup>They shall go after the LORD; he will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west; <sup>11</sup>they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares the LORD.

The LORD fulfilled these prophetic words of Hosea through Cyrus. Assyria conquered the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and took them into captivity and Babylon conquered the two tribes of Judah and took them into captivity. Later Babylon conquered Assyria so Israel with Judah was under Babylonian rule for seventy years.

At the end of this seventy years God used Cyrus the King of Media Persia as his anointed shepherd to punish Babylon for the way they had treated His people while in captivity. The mighty armies of Media Persia conquered the Babylonian Empire and Cyrus gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of God. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and

Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden age of prosperity and peace followed for Israel. (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

The following verses not only show that the God said Cyrus is His anointed shepherd and He will call him by his name and equip him even though Cyrus does not know Him, but also show that God will go before Cyrus and take his right hand while He opened doors before him that may not be closed while Cyrus levels the exalted places, subdues all nations and fulfils God's purposes.

- The LORD says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose"; saying of Jerusalem, "She shall be built," and of the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." (Isaiah 44:28).
- Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (the LORD) will go before you (Cyrus) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, <sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. <sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. (Isaiah 45:2-4).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, (Cyrus) though you do not know me, <sup>6</sup>that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).

Clearly Hosea's message was fulfilled at the end of Israel's seventy year Babylonian captivity, but, his prophetic words, "I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst and will not come in wrath, but with a roar like a lion calling my children from the West and they will come like doves to their homes," (Hosea 11:9-11) transcends the era of Cyrus and echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in who God is also building a temple made up of Jews and Gentiles (also called a new nation or new creation in Christ).

### **Israel has Surrounded God with Lies, but Judah is Faithful to the Holy One.**

Hosea 11:12 ----- <sup>12</sup>Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit, but Judah still walks with God and is faithful to the Holy One.

Sadly Judah eventually became as corrupt as Israel, so God was forced to use Babylon as His servant to bring judgment upon them.

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### **The Commonwealth of Israel.**

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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End.