

GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

– *DECEMBER 12. – HOSEA 11:1-11. –*

ISRAEL TREATED AS A SON BY GOD – REBELLIOUS, SELF-WILLED, UNFAITHFUL – GOD'S MERCIES PURSUED THEM FOR CENTURIES – ISRAEL'S CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON – RETURN TO GOD'S FAVOR FORETOLD.

**"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."
– Verse 4.**

HOSEA prophesied in Israel – the ten-tribe kingdom – prior to the Babylonian Captivity, dying about the time that Samaria capitulated. The name Hosea signifies salvation and corresponds well with the prophecy. The Lord through Hosea made plain to Israel that their national destruction and captivity was at hand; that it was a punishment for sin; but that it also told the people of God's sympathy for them, of His many loving forbearances, etc., and assured them that He would continue to love them to the end, and eventually bless them and recover them from the land of the enemy.

Hosea's own experiences in life in some degree pictured the Lord's experiences with Israel. Hosea's wife was unfaithful to him, as Israel had been unfaithful to the Lord. Following the Lord's direction, Hosea took back his wife, reclaiming her; and his message to Israel was of God's continued love for that people – that although they had been unfaithful to the Lord, He would nevertheless loyally receive them again when they should have learned their lesson and be glad to come back as a bird from Egypt and a trembling dove from Babylonia.

"THE LORD LOVED THEE"

Love is the keynote of the Bible, notwithstanding the fact that it contains threatenings as well as promises, and declarations and manifestations of justice as well as of mercy. If God's character were devoid of Justice – if His Love should override His Justice – it would be a terrible calamity for all those dependent upon Him. It would testify weakness of character instead of strength. It is the fact that God's Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power operate in full harmony – in coordination – that gives us admiration for Him, confidence in Him, love for Him; and all these appreciations are intensified as we realize His unchangeableness.

From the beginning God foreknew His Plan as we see it gradually ripening. He foreknew that man, allowed to take his course, would fall deeply into sin and be overwhelmed in its penalty, death. He foreknew His own purpose to provide in due time the Lamb of God as a Ransom-Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He foreknew the ultimate blessing of all the families of the earth, purposing that the glorified Redeemer should be the Deliverer of mankind. He foreknew and arranged a thousand years of restitution work, when under Messiah's glorious Kingdom all mankind should be brought to a full knowledge of God and a full opportunity for returning to all that was lost in Eden, all that was redeemed at Calvary; and when the ultimately rebellious should be destroyed. He foresaw from the beginning the glorious result when every knee would be bowing and every tongue confessing the glorious work of Messiah's Kingdom. This entire Program was to be of the Father and through the Son. – 1 Corinthians 8:6.

It was incidental to this great Plan that God foresaw the wisdom of having a saintly company associated with Jesus in the great work of His Millennial Kingdom, which is to govern and bless thousands of millions. God determined to have two saintly companies. One class was to be of the earth, earthy, samples of

what mankind might all eventually attain to through the assistance of the Kingdom. The other class of saints, still more highly exalted, were to be the Bride of Messiah and His Joint-heir in the Kingdom on the spirit plane. God could have filled these honorable positions with angels, who would have been glad of the opportunity of thus serving. However, instead, He chose to gather these companies from amongst men – from amongst the sinners themselves.

CALLING ABRAHAM'S POSTERITY

Many ways were open before the Lord for the gathering of the Elect for the future service. The one which He chose and has been carrying out was undoubtedly the [R5809 : page 362] wisest, the best. First of all, God called Abraham – a sinner like others, but one whose heart was full of trust in God and who delighted in the right ways of the Lord to the extent of his ability. God's Promise to Abraham was that his seed should constitute the Elect, and that through that seed all nations would receive a Divine blessing.

The period of nearly four thousand years since God's Covenant with Abraham has been devoted to the development of Abraham's seed – a natural seed and a Spiritual Seed. The two were mentioned to Abraham indirectly when the Lord said, "Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore." (Genesis 22:17.) The stars of heaven thus are used to represent the Spiritual Seed of Abraham; the sand of the seashore, the natural seed.

For more than eighteen centuries God dealt with the natural seed of Abraham. His promises to them and the Law Covenant made with them were great blessings, inspirations, assistances. For although the Israelites, like others, were unable to keep the Law Covenant, being imperfect, sinners, nevertheless the endeavor to obey was helpful. The various chastisements of Israel, including their Babylonian captivity, were lessons intended for their good, and eventually made that nation, at the time when Jesus came to be

the Redeemer, the most holy people in all the world – the only people recognized of God.

"HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN"

Nevertheless, much of the holiness of Israel in Jesus' day was merely a form of godliness, which did not stand the test. Only Israelites indeed – pure in heart, in motive – were enabled to appreciate the Gift of God and to become Jesus' disciples – probably 25,000 in all. Then the door of opportunity to become fellow-heirs with the Jewish saints was thrown open to the Gentiles; and God's Message was given them, inviting them also to joint-heirship with Christ. The gathering of this class has proceeded for eighteen centuries, while the nation of Israel has been rejected from God's favor. Now we are entering the great Time of Trouble which is to inaugurate Messiah's Kingdom. During this trouble the Church is to be glorified in the First Resurrection. Then the thousand years of Messiah's Reign with the elect, spiritual Bride, drawn from both Jews and Gentiles, will begin.

Still God's favor will pursue the natural seed of Abraham. Their lessons and chastisements will fit and prepare them more quickly than others of the world to receive the Messianic blessing. The earthly phase of Messiah's Kingdom will be Israelitish, in that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets and saintly ones down to John the Baptist are to be made "princes in all **[R5810 : page 362]** the earth" (Psalm 45:16) – the earthly representatives in human perfection of the spiritual Kingdom of Messiah.

Naturally enough, Israel will then in a natural way come first into harmony with the Divine arrangement and be the first to get the blessing. However, during the thousand years of the Kingdom, as the Scriptures declare, all nations shall bless themselves in becoming Abraham's seed – in coming into relationship with the Kingdom, which will have an Israelitish basis. (Jeremiah

4:2; Isaiah 65:16; Genesis 12:3.) Eventually, all will be destroyed who do not thus become true Israelites. Thus Abraham's seed will eventually include all the families of the earth – all for whom God has provided life eternal. As for Gentiles – strangers from God – none will remain.

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