

Commentary on Hosea 11 and 22 by Chuck Smith 2.7.24

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February memory verse Galatians 6:7 (NKJV) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

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Chapter 11

God continues His lament and all. He said,

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt ([Hsa 11:1](#)).

Now, this verse has been used in Matthew's gospel as a prophecy concerning the fact that Jesus would be taken to Egypt when a baby.

Now, you see as you read the verse that the primary understanding is that God is talking about how that He brought Israel, the people Jacob when they were a child and God loved them, and He brought His Son out of Egypt. That is primarily the understanding and the interpreting would be that the nation of Israel coming out of Egypt and into the land that God promised. But by the Holy Spirit and the commentary of Matthew, we know that there is a twofold understanding to the scripture, and that it also is in reality a prophecy of the flight of Mary and Joseph to Egypt when Jesus was just a child, remaining of course in Egypt until the death of Herod.

And as they called them, so they went from them: and they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images ([Hsa 11:2](#)).

Now when Israel was just a child, just a new nation, God loved them. He brought them out of Egypt. He called them, but they went from them and then they began soon to sacrifice unto the false gods.

I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them ([Hsa 11:3](#))

When they were child, I taught them really to walk.

I took them by the arms;

And held them. I was just developing them, helping them in their development.

but they knew not that I healed them ([Hsa 11:3](#)).

They didn't really recognize the place of God in their national life. Though God had brought them into existence, though God was nurturing them, taking care of them,

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taking them by the arms, helping them to walk; yet they did not recognize that it is God's hand that is upon us and that is developing us. Even as we now seem to fail to realize the place that God had in the birth of this nation and in the development of this nation.

And God said, I drew them with cords of a man, and with bonds of love: bands of love (Hsa 11:4):

Oh, how God loved them. and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them (Hsa 11:4).

But now they are thinking, some of them, of going back to Egypt to escape the Assyrians. God had brought them out of Egypt. But oh how tragic when we go back to those things from which God once delivered us or even think about going back to those places from which God has delivered us. But though they are thinking about going to Egypt.

the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return (Hsa 11:5).

So rather than going to Egypt, they are going to be conquered by Assyria.

And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. And my people are bent to backsliding from me: and though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him (Hsa 11:6-7).

Their hearts were just turned and they were determined to just leave the worship of God.

How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? (Hsa 11:8)

Listen to God's cry. Listen to this plaintive cry of God for these people. Even though they've turned their back on Him, even though they won't acknowledge Him, even though they're worshipping these other gods, God is unwilling to let them go. Oh, love that will not let me go.

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? my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together (Hsa 11:8).

God's cry, "Oh, how can I give you up? How can I let you go?" And thus God said,

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 (Hsa 11:9).

And then the glorious promise here of that day that is coming when God will restore Israel to his place of prominence in the kingdom.

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They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west (Hsa 11:10).

Now, when Jesus Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, comes again, He is going to let out a roar like a lion. He came in meekness and humility, as a lamb to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. Isaiah said of Him, "As a sheep that is before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). And He came as a lamb, as a sacrificial lamb in order that He might be the sacrifice for our sins. But when He comes again, He's coming as a lion, the king of the beasts, in triumph, in power, in glory. "Then shall they see the Son of man," He said, "coming with clouds and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). And He, when He sets His foot there upon the Mount of Olives, He's gonna roar like a lion. Oh, I can hardly wait to hear that. Man.

There are several places in the Old Testament where this is mentioned. Joel, chapter 3:16, has a reference there to His roaring like a lion. But when you get to the book of Revelation chapter 10 and Christ returns, sets one foot upon the sea and one upon the land and holds the scroll open now in His hands and the declaration is made, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, it said, "and he shall roar as a lion who has triumphed over his prey." So the fulfillment of Hosea 11:10 here will take place; its fulfillment is described in Revelation chapter 10. So you might want to read that in conjunction with His roaring here like a lion.

They shall tremble [that is, the nations from the west] 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. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah is still retaining its position with God, and is faithful with the saints (Hsa 11:11-12).

So the Northern Kingdom is apostate; it's to be destroyed. Judah, for the time being, is still faithful, but their day's also coming.

Chapter 12

Ephraim feeds on the wind, and follows after the east wind: he daily increases lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians (Hsa 12:1),

They tried to escape the destruction of God by making a covenant with the Assyrians and by buying mercenaries from Egypt, sending down oil to Egypt. But all of these devices failed.

The Lord also has a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him (Hsa 12:2).

Jacob is in for judgment and the Lord says now of Jacob, and this is the actual Jacob of history, Esau's son.

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He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yes, he had power over the angel, and prevailed (Hsa 12:3-4):

Now this takes us historically back to the story of when Jacob and Esau were born. Rebekah was carrying these two sons in her womb. She's having a terrible pregnancy. In fact, she's having such a bad time, she said, "God what's going on?" A terrible pregnancy. The Lord said, "You've got two nations in your womb. They're diverse, different from each other. They're fighting." Here were these twin brothers, fraternal twins, who were going at it in the womb, fighting with each other while they were still within the womb. God said that they're battling with each other. That's why you're having such a terrible time in pregnancy. Imagine what that would be like having a couple of little guys really flailing away with each other within your womb. So that when they were born, the first one which came out was Esau covered with hair, so they called him hairy, which the name Esau means hairy. When the second one was born, still fighting, he reached over and grabbed his brother, who had just been born, by the heel, not gonna give up on this fight, and they called him Yacov. "Oh," he said, "he's a heel catcher, Yacov."

Later on as they were growing up, their father Isaac was ready to give the paternal blessing upon the older son. Asked him to go out and to get some venison and barbecue it and fix it like he likes it. So he'd bring it in and when he ate he would then give him the blessing. And so Jacob disguised himself as his older brother, his mother barbecued a goat, made it taste like venison, and Jacob took it in because his father at this point was blind, and he received the blessing that was due to Esau. In fact, the father thought he was blessing Esau, but instead he was blessing Jacob. And so Jacob went out from the presence of his father and Esau came in with the venison all barbecued and he said, "Here you are, Dad, bless me." And the father of Esau said, "Well, I've already blessed you." "No." I said, "It must be that rat brother of mine Jacob," you know. And he said... he began to weep, he cried, said, "Bless me! Is there anything left? Bless me, Dad." And said, "Well, I've given him everything, you know, in the blessing. I've given it all to him."

Well Esau comforted himself with the thought, "I'm gonna kill that rat as soon as Dad dies." And he was comforting himself with that. "I'm just gonna kill him." So, realizing that Esau had this hatred towards Jacob, their mother sent Jacob off to Mesopotamia to her family in order that his brother's vengeance might not be taken out on him. Now, when Jacob was there in Mesopotamia, he fell in love with his cousin, bargained with her dad that for seven years of labor he should have her as his wife. Of course, we know the old switcharoo. He worked for seven years then, so the old man Laban... they had the marriage ceremony. And, of course, she was all veiled and everything else, but when Jacob woke up in the morning and went to kiss his wife, found out that it was her sister and her older sister. So he went storming into Laban and said, "What is this? What have you done? You know I worked for Rachel, how come you passed off Leah on me?" It was just custom you know. The older sister has to be married first and so it's custom. But if you want to work another seven years you can have the other sister too, you know."

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So he labored a second seven-year term to receive Rachel as his bride. And then afterwards he continued to work for Laban on an arrangement of a portion of the cattle and the sheep and so forth would be Jacob's. Well, Jacob could see that because he was being prospered and blessed so much his other cousins were becoming very jealous; Laban himself was becoming jealous. And so he decided that he, you know, better go back home because things are getting too hot here. So Jacob started back, and on the way, unbeknownst to him, his wife Rachel had taken some of the family images. And so when Laban came in, he said, "Where's Jacob?" His son said, "Oh, he took off a few days ago, you know, with everything--heading back to their land."

So he got together a posse and they started out after Jacob with a host. And the night before he caught up with Jacob the Lord came to Laban and said, "Don't you lay a hand on him. If you do, you're in big trouble." So Laban caught up with Jacob the next day and they had words and he said, "Well, it's not enough that you take my daughters and take my possessions and everything else, but you've also taken my gods." And Jacob did not know what Rachel had done, and he said, "Well, if you can find them, you know, they're yours." So Laban went through everything and of course Rachel was hiding them and he didn't find them. But at any rate, it was a very tense experience because Laban was still angry. In fact, if it weren't that the Lord warned him... in fact, he said, "If God hadn't told me not to touch you, man, you'd be in big trouble. You'd be a dead man now." But he said, "The Lord told me not to touch you."

So he said, "Look, here's a line. Now don't you come back over this line and I won't cross over that line," you know and he drew the line between them. And then they said, "Mizpah," which some people had picked up as sort of a pleasant good-bye, you know. It means, "The Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another." You say, "Well that's beautiful." Yes, except in the context, "You're taking my daughters away. I'm not gonna be able to watch you, you scoundrel. I think you're ripping me off. May the Lord watch you while we're absent. I can't watch you, may the Lord be watching you while we're absent one from another."

Now Jacob left this tense scene and he gets news. "Your brother Esau is coming to meet you; he's got two hundred men." Oh man, you know, this is the end of the road. Can't go back, we've drawn a line. And here I'm going forward and my brother Esau who has vowed to kill me is on his way now with two hundred men. He's come to the little river of Jabbok. And so they divide things up into two companies, in case he strikes one company, the other might be able to get away. And then he sets up his family all safe on... or hopefully safe on the one side of the river, at least give them a chance to make off. And he went back over the river and it said, "That night an angel of the Lord wrestled with him all night long." Now tomorrow's gonna be a heavy day. You're gonna be meeting Esau with his two hundred men. Yesterday was a heavy day; I had this big to-do with Laban. Man, I need a good night's rest. I really need be fresh for tomorrow; it's gonna be a rough one. But an angel of the Lord wrestled with this fellow all night long, until morning, until the day began to break.

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Well, Jacob was a fighter; he was tough. He also was very resourceful. A man who is intuitively resourceful many times has great difficulty in really submitting to God. A man who is the master of every situation and can connive and figure his way out of problems so often fails to really submit himself totally to God. He's clever, he's wise, he understands human nature, he's able to manipulate and he had gotten by on his wits all the way along. This fellow lived on his wits. And thus, when he was wrestling with the Lord he wasn't about ready to give up, hanging in there all night long until the morning began to break. And when the morning began to break, when the Lord saw that he could not prevail, this guy's not gonna give up, then he touched him there in his hip joint and caused really the muscles of his upper thighs to shrivel, crippling him. Then the Lord said, "Let me go because the day is breaking." And at this point Jacob's still hanging on, said, "I will not let you go until you bless me." The Lord says, "What is your name?" He said, "Heel catcher." He said, "Your name will no longer be heel catcher, but governed by God, Israel." Governed by God.

Now, it would seem from the story that Jacob, by his stubborn persistence, prevailed against the Lord. Not so. Hosea gives us the commentary, something we don't get out of the story in Genesis, but an insight that causes us to now really understand what happened.

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yes, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: [how?] he wept, and made supplication (Hsa 12:3-4):

You see, what happened was when the Lord touched him and crippled him, he then realized, "It's too much. I've had it." And he was a broken man; he began to weep. And his was not a demand, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." It was a prayer, "Please bless me. Don't go without blessing me." And he was weeping. He was a defeated man at this point; he was begging. God finally brought him to the place where He needed to bring him in order that He might work in him His blessings. So many times God has to bring us to the end of ourselves and to the end of our resources and to the end of our schemes and the end of our cleverness and cut off every other avenue until I am beat, I am defeated, there's nowhere to go. There are times when God has to cripple a person to bring him to this place, and now Jacob is defeated. He's been brought to that place of helplessness. He is weeping, he is crying out in desperation, "Please don't go without blessing me." And here he receives that glorious blessing. It's in the change of his name, which represents the whole change of life. You'll no longer be a man who gets by with your wits and with your scheming and with your cleverness, but you're to be a man now who is governed by God.

The next morning as he crossed the brook back towards his wife, his wives and his children, as he was trying to make his way through the brook with this shriveled leg, this crippled condition, I can hear Rachel and Leah saying "What happened? How come you're crippled? What's happened, Jacob?" I believe he straightened up and said, "Don't call me Jacob. Call me Israel. My life has changed. No longer am I a supplanter,

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now I am a man who is governed by God." And the place of defeat became the place of greatest victory.

And that's so often true in our lives when God brings us to that place of utter desperation where I've had it and I have to just say, "Hey that's it. I can't go any further. This is all. This is the end of the road. I can't go." That can be the day of the greatest blessing of your entire life, if at that point you learn to just commit everything to God and to be governed now by God. "God, it's in Your hands. I just... I'm through, not going to try anymore, not gonna scheme anymore. God, it's just in Your hands. My life is now to be governed by Thee."

And so Hosea gives us this beautiful commentary and insight to this incident. If you just read it in Genesis you'll find difficulty with it, but with Hosea's commentary we now understand that his victory came from defeat as he was weeping and begging, brought to the end of himself that he might be governed by God.

God found him in Bethel while he was fleeing from his brother Esau. He stopped in Bethel and there he went to sleep using a rock for a pillow. And he had the dream, the heavens were opened and the ladder on up to heaven and the angels of heaven are ascending and descending. And in the morning when he woke up he looked around and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." There was nothing to suggest that God was there. Bethel is just rocks, rocky place, barren. There are no beautiful waterfalls, there are no great forests or anything, just barren rocky ground. Nothing to suggest the presence of God, but yet he became so conscience of it and he called it Bethel; this is the house of God.

Even the LORD of hosts; the LORD is his memorial. Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait upon God continually ([Hsa 12:5-6](#)).

The exhortation to the people. For he is a merchant ([Hsa 12:7](#)),

That is Ephraim, now he is referring Ephraim. Ephraim has become a merchant.

but the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loves to oppress. Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found great substance: in all of my labors they shall find no iniquity in me that were sins. And that I am the LORD ([Hsa 12:7-9](#))

God responds and said,

And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tents, as in the days of the solemn feast ([Hsa 12:9](#)).

The Feast of Tabernacles where they dwell in the booths and remember God's provision through the wilderness.

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I have also spoken by the prophets, I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets (Hsa 12:10).

God said, "I have spoken to you. I spoke to you by the prophets, by the multiplying of visions and using of similitudes." The prophets doing these things that would bring a message to the people.

Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are heaps in the furrows of the field. And Jacob fled to the country of Syria (Hsa 12:11-12),

Again, going back to the story of Jacob fleeing from his brother Esau

and Israel [or Jacob] served for a wife, and for a wife he kept Laban's sheep. And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, [by Moses that is] and by a prophet they were preserved. Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him (Hsa 12:12-14).