

Hosea 11:12-12:13| Gods formal accusation against a sinful Nation

I. The whole nation is corrupt! (Hosea 11:12-12:1)

The Main point of this verse is that both the Southern and Northern kingdoms are Apostate. The nation that Yahweh inhabits surrounds him with Lies, deceit, and rebellion. In (12:1) Yahweh focuses in on The Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) who is said to be “feeding on the wind” the idea here is that Israel is cast in the role of a shepherd who seeks to control the wind in the way that he normally controls his herds and goes in pursuit of strays. The point of the metaphor, then, is that Israel is trying to control what is by nature uncontrollable, namely “pursuing east wind” which cannot be controlled. They are guilty of trying to play the role of God rather than trusting God. This lack of trust in God manifested through political alliance that were made with Assyria and Egypt and it has led Israel into sin (Falsehood and Violence). All this sin is manifest by Israels unfaithfulness to Yahweh, they made a covenant with Assyria and tried to bride Egypt with oil.

II. Israel is just like his ancestor Jacob! (Hosea 12:2-6) ---Hosea here compares Israel to their father Jacob. Like Jacob, Israel is also guilty of being a deceiver. To understand this second you need to know about the Life of Jacob as recorded in the book of Genesis (Genesis 27-25)

- **(vv2) ---**God has a formal accusation against Israel for his sins. He promises here to punish the whole nation. The terms Judah and Jacob are synonyms for Israel as a whole nation. Who is Judah but a son of Jacob and Jacob is the Father of the 12 tribes that compose the Nation of Israel. What we need to understand is that although Israel was a divided kingdom during this time, this does not mean that one side was good and the other was bad. Both divisions of the divided kingdom contributed to the corruption of the nation as a whole. Therefore, Yahweh promises judgment to the whole nation. This is good news because this tells us that we can trust God. His promise of judgement here is rooted in his covenant faithfulness because back in the Mosaic law God explicitly tell Israel as a whole nation that he will Judge Her if she s unfaithful (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28). He Judged the Northern Kingdom in 721 BC by allowing the Assyrians to overthrow them and in 586 BC he Judged the Northern kingdom by allowing the Babylonians to overthrow them.
- **(vv3-6)** Hosea open verse 3 with a call for Israel to from the life of their father Jacob “In the womb” and “as a man” indicate that Hosea has the entire narrative of Jacobs life in mind. Like his father Jacob, Israel as a nation has the reputation of being a “deceiver “, the reference to Jacob’s birth is a wordplay on Jacob’s name which literally means “he takes by heel” which is a Hebrew idiom that refers to a person who takes advantage of people or deceives people Hosea is referring to (Genesis 25:26). Gary Smith writes, “*Jacob is pictured as one who spent his life using deceptive means to get ahead instead of trusting God—the same thing the people of Israel in Hosea’s audience are doing.*” (NIV APPLICATION COMMENTARY: Hosea, Page 173)

Hosea goes on the use another wordplay, by referring to Jacob as a man who “struggled with God” this is a word play on the name “Israel” which mean “he strives with God” which is a Reference to the life of Jacob in (Genesis 32:26). His point here is that Like their father Jacob, the nation of Israel is wrestling with God fighting for their own way but instead of fighting for their own way they need to be begging for Gods mercy and blessing like Jacob did.

Additionally, Hosea mentions “Bethel” which is a reference to Abraham’s journeys to Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22, 35:6-15) Jacob’s two journeys to Bethel are a tale of younger Jacob and Older Jacob. When Jacob first visited Bethel he was a deceiver on the run from his brother whom he deceived but when he arrived in Bethel, he met God in a profound way (Genesis 28:16-20) and God affirmed his intent to bless him (Genesis 28:10-22) not because of him but because of Abraham (Genesis 28:13-15). Leading up to his second meeting with God at Bethel Jacob experienced a series of events that led to the turning point of his life. He settled in Paddan Aram (Genesis 29:1-14), he married and has children (Genesis 29:14-30:22), He got a taste of his own medicine by experiencing deception from Laban his father in law and yet God still blesses him with great wealth (Genesis 30:25-43), He flees from Laban and they settle their differences (Genesis 31:1-55). Jacob is finally confronted with the reality that he must face his brother Esau, he plans to manipulate him with gifts (32:1-21) but instead God intervenes and wrestles with Jacob to prepare him to face his brother (Genesis 32:22-32), He finally meets Esau and settles the issue (Genesis 33) and Jacob’s daughter is raped and his sons retaliate by killing Canaanites (Genesis 34), This forces Jacob to return to Bethel for a second time where God changed his name from Jacob to Israel this means that Jacob returned as a changed man (Genesis 35:9-10). As one commentator writes, *Hosea’s example is also a challenge for the people to go back to their roots to follow Jacob and meet Yahweh, the God of hosts (Hos. 12:5), and to truly listen to what he said at Bethel. At that time God promised to be their God, to care for them, and to give them the blessings of Abraham. This is Israel’s promise and hope too, if they do not act like the younger Jacob, who tried to get everything through deception. The life of Jacob calls Israel to learn from the past and repent! (Hosea 12:6)*

III. Israel is acting like Canaanites! (Hosea 12:7-10)

By using the term “merchant”, Hosea in the Hebrew language is actually playing on words because the Hebrew term for “merchant” is also the Hebrew word for “Canaan” because Canaanites were as traders or merchants (Zephaniah 1:11, Ezekiel 16:29, 17:4) The Phoenicians called themselves Canaanites or merchants (Isa 23:8). One commentator writes, *They who naturally were descendants of pious Jacob had become virtually Canaanites, who were proverbial as cheating merchants, the greatest reproach to Israel, who despised Canaan (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary)*. Like Canaanites, Israel was dishonest and cheating nation who became wealthy by doing so and they have deceived themselves into thinking that God is not aware of their sin (vv8) but they are mistaken because God does indeed see their sin and he is planning to send them into exile because of it (vv9) and He has sent prophets to let them know that he is aware of it (vv10). The reference to “Gilgal” (vv11) is the content of what Hosea has already told Israel, They know Gilgal is wicked (Hosea 6:8), They have already been told not to commit idolatry (Hosea 4:15), They have already been told that idolatry is sinful (Hosea 8:11). Simply put, Israel as a nation is “stiff necked” both the northern and southern kingdoms rebelled against the prophets and were sent into exile (2 Kings 17:21-23, 2 Chronicles 36:15-17). Stephen in his sermon in Acts says that the nation has always been rebellious, killing prophets (Acts 7:51-53).

IV. Israel has strayed away from her humble beginnings! (Hosea 12:12-13)

JACOB—The Origin of Israel as an ethnic people (vv12). Their father Jacob was a fugitive and Sojourner (Genesis 28:5) who served seven years for his wife (Genesis 29:18). John Calvin writes, *What was his nobility? What was his power? What was his dignity and eminence according to the flesh? Yea, truly, he was a fugitive from his own country: had he always lived at home, his father was but a sojourner; but he was constrained to flee into Syria. And how splendidly did he live there? He was indeed with his uncle; but he was treated no better than if he had been some worthless slave: He served for a wife And how did he serve? He was a keeper of sheep. Go then now and boast of your dignity, as if ye were nobler than others, as if your condition were better than that of the common sort of people." God then brings against them the condition of their father, in whose name they gloried, but who was an abject person and a fugitive, who was like a worthless slave, who was a keeper of sheep; who, in short, had nothing which could be deemed reputable among men. - John Calvin, Commentary on Hosea 12:12*

MOSES---The origin of Israel as a Nation (vv13). The nation of Israel has to sojourn in the wilderness for 40 years before they could enter into the promise land to become an established nation (Exodus 13:3, Isaiah 63:11-14). John Gill writes: *"by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt,.... Or, "by the prophet"; the famous and most excellent prophet Moses, who, by way of eminency, is so called; him the Lord sent, and employed, and made use of him as an instrument to bring his people out of their bondage in Egypt. and by a prophet he was preserved; by the same prophet Moses was Israel preserved at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; where they were kept as a flock of sheep from their powerful enemies, and brought to the borders of Canaan's land. The design of this observation seems to be to put the Israelites in remembrance of their low estate in Egypt, and of the goodness of God to them in delivering them from thence, which they had sadly requited by their degeneracy and apostasy from him; and to him unto them how much they ought to have valued the prophets of the Lord, though they had despised them, since they had received such benefits and blessings by the means of a prophet."*

Application

Learn from Israel's sin! ---Those who do not learn from the past will repeat it. God included this passage in the bible so that we can avoid doing what Israel did and repent (*1 Corinthians 10:11-12*).

Turn to Jesus Christ! ---Repentance begin with turning away from sin and placing faith in Christ (Mark 1:15). The whole point of scripture is to point us to Christ! Apart from Christ we are just like the nation of Israel. Only Christ can save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). It is only in Christ do we have the power and grace to avoid Israel's sin (John 5:39, John 3:16-18).