Hosea - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Bible Treasury: Volume N10, Notes on Hosea 7:8-16

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Many figures are employed in this chapter to describe the sad moral state of Israel at that time; not the least striking and suggestive is that in verse 9— “Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.” Is this applicable to Israel only, or does it apply in principle to any of us?

The tendency of all things here, whether physical, moral or spiritual, is to decline, to decay, and to death. The histories of man, of Israel, of the church, and of ourselves, collectively and individually, alike testify to this universal fact. But in verse 9 there is something more solemn than the signs of decline and decay which Jehovah discovered in His people—it is that they were utterly insensible to them. “Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.” The natural consequence of this decline and departure from God is that the soul becomes unconscious of its state.

Mal. 1 illustrates this solemn truth. We see all through this chapter how utterly indifferent Israel is to every claim of Jehovah—they question His love, His authority, His service, His name, Himself—they are totally unconscious of every claim.

What was the cause of Ephraim's state in Hosea? There were three causes, pride, worldliness, and self-will or rebellion—the first two secondary, the third primary. The first then is pride— “and the pride of Israel testifieth to his face” (verse 10). Pride goes before a fall. Is there any sin so common, or to which we yield ourselves so much, as pride of heart?

The second cause is worldliness— “they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria” (verse 11). Egypt is a type of the world in its natural state. Other nations also typify the world, but in different ways, e.g., Moab, pride of the world; Babylon, religious corruption. Worldliness of any sort inevitably brings with it declension or deadness.

In verses 13 to 16 we find the primary cause—departure from, and rebellion against, Jehovah. The Lord charges this home to them seven times—They have fled from Me; they have transgressed against Me; they have spoken lies against Me; they have not cried unto Me with their heart; they rebel against Me; they imagine mischief against Me; they return not to the Most High. How complete was the fall! The cause—departure of heart from the Lord.

Is there then no remedy? At one point in the history of God's people He bore with them until there was “no remedy” (2 Chron. 36:16), but thank God it is not so with us, and it was not so here. We find the remedy in Hosea 14. This chapter is one of the most touching and gracious in the whole of the Old Testament. First, we have a gracious and loving call to repentance and return of heart to the Lord; that is the first step towards restoration. Verses 2 and 3 are an exhortation to full confession and abandonment of all trust in human sources of strength, and of, the sin of idolatry; while in verse. 4 we have the gracious response of the Lord.

Then, in the two following verses we have, under the most beautiful figures, the results of the restoration of the soul. “I will be as the dew unto Israel” —refreshing and fertilizing grace and blessing from the Lord Himself. “He shall grow (or, blossom) as the lily” —in grace, purity and humility. “And cast forth his roots as Lebanon” —firmly rooted and established in the grace of God, “His branches shall spread” —a means of blessing to others. “And his beauty shall be as the olive tree” —beautiful in the eyes of the Lord. What a loving interest He takes in His own, how He delights in them and loves to see the beauties and graces of Christ in them! “And His smell as Lebanon” —how acceptable and delightful to the Lord is the fragrance of Christ in His people!” They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon (ver. 7). What a picture of a happy moral state of soul before the Lord! What a Wonderful thing that His people should be so acceptable to Him!

Verse 8. This verse is a kind of dialog between Ephraim and Jehovah. There is Ephraim's happy resolve— “What have I to do any more with idols?” Then Jehovah speaks— “I have heard him and observed him.” Who first saw the gray hairs and the turning away of heart? Jehovah. Who saw the first symptoms of returning? Jehovah. “I have... observed him.” Who was the first to observe the departure of the, prodigal and to miss him from the paternal table (Luke 15)? Who was on the look-out for his return?— “and when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran”. Who was the first to discern the decline of first love in Ephesus (Rev. 2)?

But we may be occupied with our blessings and become proud of them. Is there any pride like spiritual pride? Ephraim says, “I am like a green fir tree.” There is not a single grace or mercy that does not come directly from the heart of God (James 1:17); we have nothing apart from Him. So Jehovah answers Ephraim— “From Me is thy fruit found.”

In John 15:4.8 it is not a question of life but of communion. There may be life but very little, fruit—fruit results from communion with the Lord. “Apart from Me ye can do nothing.” So here, “From Me is thy fruit found.”

Ephraim was unconscious of his gray hairs; so we, if we get away from the Lord, may become unconscious of it ourselves; but grace works in our hearts and brings us back to God.

Are we not dependent on Him for restoration of soul every day of our lives? What so prone to wander as a sheep and what so silly when it finds itself alone on the desolate moors and barren mountains of this world? But the shepherd it is who goes after it and brings it back.

May we be found cleaving to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

C.J.D.

Questions and Answers in Christian Treasury, Questions and Answers: 2000 Years Reckoned?

Ques. A Californian asks about the January editorial concerning the prophecy of Hos. 5:15 to 6:2. What is the point from which the 2000 years is to be reckoned?

Ans. To the Lord be all the praise that you have found the "Christian Treasury" to be a blessing to you over the past several months. Now I reply to your question concerning "the point from which the 2000 years is to be reckoned. Should it be reckoned from the birth of Christ, the death of Christ, the day of Pentecost, the turning away from Israel by Paul in Acts, or the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.?" I do not believe we can state the time quite so exactly. It is important to remember that the Church is a called-out heavenly people and time does not relate to heaven. However we are chosen and called from the earth and all that takes place here does interest us and God has revealed much concerning Israel His earthly people. One verse that impresses me much as a help to your question is Gal. 4:4, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." We notice that the Son came on time the first time and we can be sure He will come on time (God's time) the second time. I am glad that you understand something about the dispensations and I will just say that I believe that they overlap. Your very questions show this and the book of Acts is referred to in this way in Heb. 9:10 where it is called the time of reformation.

Correspondence, Correspondence: HOS 2:15; EPH 2:20-22 vs. 1PE 2:4-7; Greater Miracles than Christ

Ques. What is meant by the “Valley of Achor” in Hosea. 2:15?

Ans. Our answers to this may be best given in the words of another-

“The circumstances by which God expresses Israel’s return to grace is of touching interest. The valley of Achor should be her door of hope. There when the judgment of God began to fall on the unfaithful people, after their entrance into the land (Josh. 7:26)-where God acted according to the responsibility of the people there would He now show, that grace abounded over all their sin. The joy of their first deliverance and redemption should be restored to them.”

The chief interest to us of this beautiful passage foretelling the future restoration of Israel to divine favor, lies in the use the apostle Peter makes of verse 23 (1 Peter 2:10), showing that these blessings, though still future to Israel as a nation, were the present portion spiritually of any among them who accepted the rejected Messiah.

Ques. Will you kindly explain the difference between “God’s building,” where Christ is the foundation, and what men build; and that in Eph. 2:20-22, and 1 Peter 2:4-7, where there is no builder, and Christ is the corner-stone; the foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets?

Ans. In 1 Corinthians 3 the house is indeed God’s; but inasmuch as men build, that which is not a true stone may be built in; whereas in Ephesians, God being the builder, nothing but living stones form part of the house (as in 1 Peter 2).

Ques. How could the disciples do greater miracles than Christ? (John 14:12).

Ans. The Holy Ghost who would be sent down in power, “because Jesus went to His Father” was not confined by a body to one place, but could so energize believers everywhere, that the gospel could spread far more rapidly and widely than even when individually proclaimed by the Lord, and supported by the mighty works that He did. The power was not in the disciples, but in the promised Comforter. The first fulfillment of this we see in Acts 2 in the mighty power that accompanied Peter’s preaching. It applies to those who labor in the energy of the Holy Ghost.

Bible Treasury: Volume 6, Hosea 14:9

Hos. 14:9.—We have to remark that all the dealings of God with Israel were not again of absolute final pardon or clearing, but governmental. As a figure, their redemption as a nation was at the Red Sea; and they were brought to God. They then took up law first; afterward they were put under the revelation made to Moses when God’s goodness passed before him. And were so governed. Only as a chosen people, in all their affliction he was afflicted; and his gifts and calling are without repentance. No doubt, to deliver them really, as they were sinful men and a sinful nation, Christ must die for that nation; and this they will find out at the end according to Isaiah Eli. But the ways of God meanwhile were governmental pardons and chastisements on the way. I add, till grace is fully known and redemption, the mind may put these together, because sin has deserved judgment and final rejection, and God is not known. Only in the Psalms there is provision to sustain faith till redemption be fully known to them.

Bible Treasury: Volume 13, Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15, On

The notion of the application of the words in Hosea, “I have called my Son out of Egypt,” to Christ, is ridiculed by rationalists. Now, I affirm distinctly that it is according to the tenor of scripture testimony, and quite rightly applied. It is a great leading truth.

If you look at Isa. 49, you will see Messiah distinctly presented as taking the place of Israel. I think we have spoken, when on the pseudo-Isaiah of infidels, of the elect servant of Israel, Christ the elect Servant, and the remnant the elect servant of the last days. But this chapter 49 is more definite. Israel is first presented as Jehovah's witness in the earth, as the polished shaft in His quiver. “Thou art my

servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said," exclaims Messiah, "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught and in vain." And so it was with Christ on earth. "But now, saith Jehovah, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, and to be my salvation to the end of the earth." That is, Israel is presented as the servant of the Lord; but when Christ comes, if it were so, His labor was in vain, and then Christ (though to restore the remnant in due time) is Himself God's Servant, and light goes forth to the Gentiles.

This is the passage Paul so strikingly quotes as justifying his turning from the Jews to the Gentiles, when the former rejected his message. Christ takes the place of Israel under the law, Israel after the flesh. This He does all through John, though in a higher way, as revealed Son of God. Hence, in chapter 15, He proclaims Himself as the true vine. Israel was the well-known vine, and, as remarked before, Messiah was to be the best branch, the topmost bough. But Israel is set aside. The true Vine, as the true Servant, is Christ. Israel was Jehovah's son, His first-born; but Christ was the Son, the true First-born of every creature. Hence, as rejected by Israel, He begins Israel's whole history afresh, and, as not deriving His position from the people, He is called out of Egypt to begin their history according to God. I am not saying whether scripture be wise or foolish; I believe it divinely wise; but this is not my question now. What I say is, it is the system of scripture to substitute Christ for Israel, the Second Adam for the first, and that what wholly failed as founded on the responsibility of man was taken up afresh in the perfect and unfailing Son of God. Indeed this is true, as we have seen, as to every principle of God's dealings with men, but I now speak only of Israel. And hence Matthew or the New Testament, citing the Old Testament scripture, uses it rightly according to the intended scope of scripture. People may quarrel with scripture, but they cannot say that Matthew quotes, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," in a way not according to the intention of scripture. It is the system and plan of scripture, of the Old Testament itself, thus to transfer passages from Israel, the provisional son, to Christ, the true Son.

Young Christian: Volume 8, 1918, It Is Time to Seek the Lord

Hosea. 10:12.

The month of April is said to derive its name from the Latin verb aperio, which signifies to open, because all the buds and blossoms are now opening, and we have arrived at the gates of the flowery year. Reader, if you are yet unsaved, may your heart, in accord with the universal awakening of nature, be opened to receive the Lord. Every blossoming flower warns you that it is time to seek the Lord; be not out of tune with nature, but let your heart bud and bloom with holy desires. Do you tell me that the warm blood of youth leaps in your veins? Then, I entreat you, give your vigor to the Lord. It was my unspeakable happiness to be called in early youth, and I could fain praise the Lord every day for it. Salvation is priceless, let it come when it may, but, oh, an early salvation has a double value in it.

Young men and maidens, since you may perish ere you reach your prime, "It is time to seek the Lord." Ye who feel the first signs of decay, quicken your pace; that hollow cough, that hectic flush, are warnings which you must not trifle with; with you it is indeed time to seek the Lord. Did I observe a little gray mingled with your once luxurious tresses? Years are stealing on apace, and death is drawing nearer by hasty marches. Let each return of spring arouse you to set your house in order. Dear reader, if you are now advanced in life, let me entreat and implore you to delay no longer. There is a day of grace for you now—be thankful for that, but it is a limited season and grows shorter every time that clock ticks. Here in this silent chamber, on this first night of another month, I speak to you as best I can by paper and ink, and from my inmost soul, as God's servant, I lay before you this warning, "It is time to seek the Lord."

Slight not that word; it may be your last call from destruction, the final syllable from the lip of grace.

"Those who seek Me early shall find Me" (Prov. 8:17).

"While we were yet sinners Christ diced for us." (Rom. 5:8).

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