

Uncovering what is behind Israel's apostasy in Hosea's 4th exhortation: Hosea 10 & 11

Apostasy yields judgement and consequences; even so, there remains a promise of restoration: God faithfully expresses His compassion

A brief overview of Hosea: *Five messages of Judgement for Israel's apostasy**

- In no less than five messages, God spoke through Hosea of Judgment and consequences coming to Israel
 - Hosea ¹⁾1:2-2:1; ²⁾2:2-3:5; ³⁾4:1-6:3; ⁴⁾6:4-11:11; ⁵⁾11:12-14:8
- Yet, no less than five times, God spoke also of Israel's restoration - indicating his compassion and love for Israel.
 - Hosea ¹⁾1:10-2:1; ²⁾2:14-3:5; ³⁾6:1-3; ⁴⁾11:8-11; ⁵⁾14:1-8

* Adapted from Hosea Outline by Tom Constable, [*Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003).

A brief look at apostasy in Hosea

- Foremost was Israel's religious unfaithfulness via idolatry and Baal worship! - their unrighteous discontent disregarded their propriety to God and sought worldly economic and political security
- Israel's political unfaithfulness was exemplified via treaties with foreign nations in stead of exclusive devotion to God.
- Israel's apostasy was unquestionably depicted through the marital infidelity in Hosea's marriage. There could be no confusion about the nature of Israel's sins.
- Nevertheless, the reconciliation of Hosea & Gomer clearly depicts God's compassion and desire for Israel's restoration.

This brings us to the last half of Hosea's 4th message: Hosea 10 & 11

Chapter 10:1-10 begins bringing up the same patterns of previous apostasy until we see two metaphors used in verses 10:11 & 12

Hosea 10:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh, and I spared her fair neck; but I will put Ephraim to the yoke; Judah must plow; Jacob must harrow for himself.

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Verses 10:13-15 continue to detail the consequences of their apostasy

However, let's respond first to the second metaphor

12 "Sow for yourselves righteousness; . . ."
An appeal from compassion!

This metaphor speaks of the universal appeal all prophets make:

"The prophet appealed to the Israelites again to repent. They should cultivate righteousness with a view to reaping the Lord's kindness (Heb. *hesed*). Breaking up "uncultivated ground" is what a farmer does when he plows land that has remained untouched for a long time, or even forever (cf. Jer. 4:3). This is a figure for confessing sins and exposing them to God when they have remained unconfessed under the surface of life for a long time."*

"It was time for the people to "seek" Yahweh, whom they had failed to seek in repentance for so long. They should confess and repent until the Lord sent the blessings of "righteousness" (deliverance, cf. 2:19) on them like "rain" (cf. 6:3)."

*Tom Constable, [*Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ho 10:12.

The first metaphor : *Hosea 10:11*

"¹¹ Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh"

Notice two other passages that speak of the matter:

Deuteronomy 25:4 (ESV)

⁴ "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain."

1 Timothy 5:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

Whether for an animal or one who works, a compassionate kindness at the very least! And certainly, a positive step forward toward productivity, cooperation, and training!

*The Moody Bible Commentary had this to say about:
"Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh . . . "

10:11-13a. Here Hosea introduced another agricultural metaphor. The comparison of Israel (Ephraim/Jacob) to a trained heifer wearing God's yoke indicates the nation's initial readiness to obey the covenant. Having entered into a relationship with God, Israel was instructed to sow (obey) the seeds that would produce righteousness, and thus reap God's kindness (blessing). Instead the nation had plowed wickedness and reaped injustice against God and their own people.

"Hosea," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1326.

*Dr. Tom Constable had this to say about:
"Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh"

10:11 Hosea compared Ephraim to a heifer that enjoyed threshing. *

"Threshing was a comparatively light task, made pleasant by the fact that the creature was unmuzzled and free to eat ... as it pulled the threshing sledge over the gathered corn." (Kidner, pp. 97-98.)

Ephraim had abandoned this comparatively light service in preference for becoming yoked to sin (v. 10). As punishment, Yahweh would yoke the people of both Northern and Southern Kingdoms to an enemy who would greatly restrict their movements and force them to do hard work. *

* Tom Constable, [*Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* \(Galaxie Software, 2003\), Ho 10:11.](#)

**"Ephraim was a trained calf
that loved to thresh . . . BUT . . ."**

Ephraim (Israel) had rejected the "comparatively light service" of following, obeying, and hence serving God!

Their consequences would be a harder yoke resulting in plowing and harrowing (v.12) since they had succumbed to the lusts and lures of economic prosperity and unrighteous discontent which led to their apostasy!

Consider the wisdom of the righteous: Proverbs 15:16; 16:8; 1 Tim. 6:6-7

Proverbs 15:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it. 16:8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.

1 Timothy 6:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

But what was it that caused them to reject and abandon their service to God?

Let's brainstorm a few reasons that contributed to their apostasy:

(Note: some of the reasons occur very early on in the Bible)

1. Forgotten - that they were God's possession. (Gen. 2:7-8)
2. Forgotten - God had made great provision for them time & again. (Gen. 2:15)
3. Forgotten - He had warned them time & again for their own good. (Gen. 2:16)
4. Forgotten - The love and compassion God had for his people was replete in the OT but 5 times here in Hosea ¹⁾1:10-2:1; ²⁾2:14-3:5; ³⁾6:1-3; ⁴⁾11:8-11; ⁵⁾14:1-8

Let's consider a possible motivation that led to the reasons above.

A modern descriptive term of what that could be is:

FOMO

Yes, "Fear Of Missing Out"

But first, a quick look at what came prior to FOMO in the Bible

... Prior to the appearance of FOMO in the Bible...
... The origins of man, service and work ...

Genesis 2:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

⁸ And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Three important questions must be answered)

Who created the man and planted the garden good for food?

Who put the man in the garden?

To whom did the man belong?

... Prior to the appearance of FOMO in the Bible...
... The origins of man, service and work ...

Genesis 2:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Many scholars say this is where 'work' was invented and man's fundamental responsibilities were defined:

What was the man's fundamental job description?

What 'perks', so to speak, could the man enjoy while performing the work?

Do you think the responsibilities of his work were clearly expressed?

Rich's own experience ...

... the appearance of *FOMO* in the Bible...

... Satan with two of his favorite tools: **Deception and Fear**...

The Con: Deception and FOMO (v.4) are presented:

Genesis 3:1-5 (ESV)

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The Trap: FOMO conceived (Gen.3:6-7; James 1:14-15):
Pride/selfishness/temptation fuels fear and discontent

Genesis 3:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

In the same way, Ephraim (Israel) conceived "Fears Of Missing Out" that led to their unrighteous discontent and pursuits that abandoned their Godly propriety.

The wisdom we now find in Proverbs 15:16; 16:8; 1 Tim. 6:6-7 was not appropriated!

The 4th Reason for Apostasy in Hosea

Rejection of all five promises of restoration

4. Forgotten - Love and compassion God had for his people - replete in the OT but 5 times here in Hosea ¹⁾1:10-2:1; ²⁾2:14-3:5; ³⁾6:1-3; ⁴⁾11:8-11; ⁵⁾14:1-8

In Hosea 11:1-7, Hosea recounts God's actions and expressions of love and compassion toward Ephraim (Israel); but then, Hosea recounts Ephraim's rejections!

Nevertheless, God gives His 4th promise of restoration in the final verses of Hosea 11:8-12

Nevertheless, Hosea continues to show God's love and compassion
Hosea 11:8-12 (ESV)

- ⁸ 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.
- ⁹ 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. **Let us never doubt God's love and Compassion!**
- ¹⁰ They shall go after the Lord; he will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west;
- ¹¹ 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.
- ¹² 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.

Lessons from Hosea and the Threshing Floor

Is the grass really greener on the other side?

Resisting the FOMO syndrome

1. Appropriating Truth requires effort yet it matures our relationship with Christ. Let the *"Word of Christ dwell in you richly"* and strengthen your submission and allegiance to Christ and thereby resist the fears that our flesh, the world, and Satan may present to us.
 - a) Consider appropriating more and more the Word of God:
 - 1) For example, study: Phil. 4:4-13; 1 Tim. 4:8; 6:6-7
 - 2) It is like feeding on the grain while working on the threshing floor!
2. Consider structuring your prayer life in the following order: **ACTS**
 - 1) Adoration
 - 2) Confession
 - 3) Thanksgiving
 - 4) Supplication