

The Heart of God (Part 1)

Text: Hosea 11:1-6

Date: 10-11-26

1. God's foundational love for His people (Hosea 11:1).

God chose the Jews as His people. The Bible does give us several specific reasons:

- 1) God chose Israel because He loved them (Deut. 7:7-8).
- 2) God chose Israel to bless all other nations (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7).
- 3) God chose Israel to be different than the other nations; a picture of set-apartness (Ex. 19:5-6)
- 4) God chose Israel to reveal Himself to other nations (Isa. 43:10)
- 5) God chose Israel because, through the nation, He brought the Messiah into this world (Rom. 9:4-5).

But, why the Jews? Why Israel? Doesn't He love other nations? Couldn't He have chosen someone else? Of course He could have, but He didn't. One thing is clear: God chose Israel and He has a never-ending love for that nation.

God has loved His people since the beginning in the very young stage. He demonstrated His love when He called them out of Egypt because that wasn't their home.

Application: When Israel left Egypt, they had been delivered from physical bondage as a nation. But, when Jesus came from Egypt, He delivered Israel and all nations from spiritual bondage. What a picture! The 2nd fulfillment is actually infinitely greater than the 1st one.

The great difference is the Messiah followed the path of bondage, but He did it perfectly (unlike the children of Israel in their complaining, idolatry, and disobedience). He then became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

So, the True One (John 17:3; 14:6) came to save His people: perfectly fulfilling the law, satisfying the demands of the Father, tracing the path of bondage, and turning that bondage into freedom! That is our Lord and Savior! That is the only begotten Son of God doing it for Israel, God's son. That is love.

2. The nation's forsaking of God's love (Hosea 11:2).

Several times in Hosea, God has contrasted Israel's wonderful beginning with its rebellion towards Him (9:10; 10:1). The more that God called them, the more they left Him.

The more God blessed His people, the more they chose wickedness.

3. The failure to recognize God's love for His people (Hosea 11:3)

As a compassionate and loving Father, He gave them the law to direct them, the sacrificial system to atone for sin, and the prophets to guide them back to Himself. God took His people by the hand and walked them from slavery to freedom, from disaster and defeat to deliverance, from wandering to guidance. That is God's goodness and love on display.

Yet, they continually rejected Him and failed to acknowledge His intervention. Israel failed to give credit or recognize the power and love of God in their history. "During their wilderness journeys and murmurings the people did not realize that their Father was their Physician as well, the great Jehovah Rapha (Ex. 15:26).” See also Num. 11:11-12.

4. The faithful love of God (Hosea 11:4)

God leads by example, and He also leads by caring love of His people. What else could God have done better to demonstrate His love for His people?

God led His people by *cords of a man*.

I think the context depicts a farmer leading his oxen home after a long day, lifting the yoke, freeing their jaws for the purpose of feeding them, like how a parent leads and trains their child with gentleness and also boundaries. God didn't force, pull, or drag His people. God guided his people with compassion and great love. .

This is not a picture of complete lack of control or discipline, but just the opposite. Instead of resting the yoke on the necks in a restrictive manner, God raised the yoke from the neck to the cheek or jaw. Hosea simply was demonstrating that God loved His people so much that, like "a farmer who would lift or loosen the yoke from an animal's neck so it could eat or rest. God pictures Himself as the One who relieved Israel's burden and cared for their needs." (<https://chatgpt.com/g/g-p-6912811790b48191a3e3bcf992053cod/c/6a8cd026-027c-83e8-965a-8e4c3a98db5d>).

Truth: This verse demonstrates that God had a merciful and faithful relationship with His children. He lovingly guided them, compassionately cared for them, and faithfully provided them. In turn they responded with rebellion.

5. The exacting love of God which requires justice (Hosea 11:5-6).

God's love is limitless, but it cannot ignore sin. God must punish sin. God's love is compassionate, but His love also will carry through in justice. God takes sin seriously. He did for His people in the OT, and He does the same today.

Final Word: The greatest example of these twin truths is borne in the Person of Jesus Christ. Justice and mercy borne through the taking of our sins upon Himself and dying out of deep love for His people. The heart of God is always love, and His love - while not forced - will rain down upon those who believe in Him. One day, despite the idolatry and rebellion, God will deliver on His promises and His people will be delivered through the One whom His people pierced.