

HOSEA: LOOKING BEYOND JUDGMENT TO RESTORATION

XVII: God's Call For Israel To Repent Like Jacob

(Hosea 11:12-12:6)

I. Introduction

- A. God's punishment is very painful, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12:11.
- B. This was the theme of Hosea, the "death-bed prophet of Israel" and the last prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel before it fell to Assyria in divine punishment. (ESV Introduction to Hosea)
- C. Hosea 11:12-12:6 describes God's gracious call for Israel to repent of her waywardness like her patriarch Jacob had once repented, so we view it for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. God's Call For Israel To Repent Like Jacob, Hosea 11:12-12:6.

- A. The Lord claimed that Ephraim where Israel's capitol city of Samaria was located had surrounded Him with lies, that the nation Israel had surrounded Him with "deceit," translating the noun *mirmah*, in having broken her covenant with the Lord, Hosea 11:12a; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1403. The noun *mirmah* is "especially appropriate in light of the following comparison with the patriarch Jacob (cf. 12:3-4, 12)" since "(t)he same term was used to describe Jacob's deception in stealing Esau's blessing (cf. Gen. 27:35)," Ibid.
- B. Also, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was "unruly" or *rud*, "roaming restlessly" away from God, even from the "faithful Holy One," the Lord Who was always faithful to His covenant promises to His people, Hosea 11:12b NIV; Ibid. The noun "Holy One" is plural here to emphasize the magnitude of God's faithful holiness toward His people, a key theme in the context that presents God's faithful holiness that transcends His fallible people's unfaithfulness and unholiness, Ibid., pl. 1403-1404.
- C. God explained that (1) the Northern Kingdom figuratively fed on the wind, pursuing vain goals in multiplying lies and injustice in her society and making alliances with Assyria and Egypt versus trusting God for national security, and (2) that the Lord had a charge against Judah, (3) so He would punish all the descendants of Jacob -- the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom alike -- for their misdeeds, Hosea 12:1-2.
- D. God then shifted the focus of His address to discuss the history of the Hebrew people's patriarch Jacob, the ancestor of both Israel and Judah, applying a lesson from Jacob's life to them as a people, Hosea 12:3-6:
 1. God recalled how Jacob had "grasped" his brother Esau's heel while still in the womb when he and his twin brother were born, and later how he similarly "grasped" the Angel of the Lord when he wrestled with Him when Jacob was a man, Hosea 12:3 with Genesis 25:24-26.
 2. This "grasping" initially rose from Jacob's effort to help himself by struggling against his brother Esau even when the twin boys were in the womb (Genesis 25:22-23), and it continued at their birth with Jacob "grasping" Esau's heel while he was still in the womb after Esau had come out (Genesis 25:24-26) and it continued until Jacob struggled to "grasp" or steal his brother's blessing (Genesis 27:1-41).
 3. Jacob's final "grasping" event occurred when he returned to the land of Canaan from his time with his relative Laban and he dreaded meeting his brother Esau whom he had so greatly angered by stealing his blessing. Jacob then wrestled with God, "grasping" Him and refusing to let Him go from his "grasp" until God had blessed him, Hosea 12:4-5 with Genesis 32:22-32. God had then changed Jacob's name to "Israel," meaning "He strives with God" (Genesis 32:27-28 ESV ftn.), and the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah had initially been called after that name "Israel"!
 4. Accordingly, the Lord urged His wayward people of "Israel," be they in the Northern Kingdom of Israel or in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, to do what their forefather Jacob or "Israel" had done in gaining the name "Israel:" He called them to return to their God and "grasp" Him like Jacob did for blessing instead of constantly going away from Him to "grasp" after Gentile nations and false Baals for blessing, Hosea 12:6.

Lesson: *Where Israel and Judah's common patriarch Jacob had once wrongfully deceived (mirmah) Isaac in his ongoing "grasping" struggle with his twin brother Esau that was traced back to their development in the womb only later correctly to "grasp" the Angel of the Lord in seeking His protection from his brother Esau, thus gaining the name "Israel," God urged His wrongfully deceptive (mirmah) people in Israel and Judah to "grasp" after the Lord for blessing instead of waywardly "grasping" after foreign alliances and false gods.*

Application: *(1) May we "grasp" after the Lord for blessing instead of seeking blessing from "grasping" after false gods. (2) Since Jacob's "grasping" so as not to let go of the Angel of the Lord was actually an act of faith in God that the Lord honored (Genesis 32:26-28), may we trust the Lord for the blessings that we desire in our lives!*