

HOSEA: LOOKING BEYOND JUDGMENT TO RESTORATION

XVIII: Israel's Haughtiness Countered By God's Punishment

(Hosea 12:7-14)

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 12:7-14 describes how God's punishment countered Israel's haughtiness, so we view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Israel's Haughtiness Countered By God's Punishment, Hosea 12:7-14.

- A. God likened the Northern Kingdom of Israel, here referred to as Ephraim, to a merchant in whose hands were balances of *mirmah*, balances of "deceit," the same word used of ancestor Jacob's deceit in stealing his brother Esau's blessing, Hosea 12:7a with Genesis 27:35; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1403-1404.
- B. With these false balances, Ephraim loved to "practice extortion" (*'ashaq*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 798-799) in oppressing others in business dealings, Hosea 12:7b.
- C. Then, after gaining wealth by extortion, Ephraim said, "Surely (*'ak*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 908; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 36) I am rich; I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they will not find in me iniquity or sin," Hosea 12:8. Ephraim likely held that her wealth would hide any sin in her, for she presumed that wealth would indicate to onlookers that she was divinely blessed though it had come by means of extortion!
- D. Such calloused self-deceit and haughtiness were met by God's rebuke and predicted punishment, Hos. 12:9-13:
 - 1. Using the personal pronoun in the emphatic position to start the sentence, God replied to Israel's pride, claiming, "But I Myself (*ve'anoki*, Ibid., Kittel) am Yahweh (I AM) your Elohim (Creator God)" from the time of Israel's Exodus from lowly bondage in Egypt, and God would again cause the nation to dwell in humble tents as in the days of the appointed feast of tabernacles when the nation was to recall her humble origin in the Exodus, and what would occur once again when Assyria destroyed the nation, Hosea 12:9.
 - 2. Continuing with His emphasis on Israel's humble existence, the Lord reminded Israel that He had spoken to her through prophets, multiplying visions and through them giving parables to call the nation to repent, Hosea 12:10. If there was iniquity in Gilead, representative of the entire nation's iniquity, it would come to nothing, and if in Gilgal, representative of the entire nation's idolatry, they had sacrificed bulls to idols, their altars also would be like stone heaps on the furrows of the field in Assyria's invasion, Hosea 12:11.
 - 3. God then reminded Israel that her father Jacob had deceived his brother only to have to flee from him to the land of Aram, and there he served for a wife by the humble calling of guarding sheep, Hosea 12:12.
 - 4. By means of the prophet Moses the Lord had also brought Israel up from the humble state of bondage in Egypt, and by the prophet Moses Israel had been guarded by the Lord in the wilderness, Hosea 12:13.
- E. Accordingly, since Israel had "provoked to anger" (*ka'as*) the Lord, this verb being used frequently in reference to idols (cf. Deut. 4:25; 9:18; 31:29; 32:16, 21; Jud. 2:12; 1 Kings 14:9, 15), the Lord would leave the bloodguilt of the nation on her and repay her for her disgraceful deeds by severe punishment in the Assyrian invasion, Hosea 12:14 ESV. (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1404)

Lesson: *The Northern Kingdom of Israel had haughtily assumed that because she could practice extortion to become wealthy that her wealth could hide her sin, but God critiqued Israel as being no better than her forefather Jacob who had deceived his brother Esau by stealing his blessing, only then to have to flee and live by serving his father-in-law Laban in humility by keeping sheep. Indeed, Israel's history was full of God's condescending grace in delivering her from bondage in Egypt by the prophet Moses and then speaking to her through many prophets in trying to call her back to Himself. Accordingly, God would level severe punishment on the nation, bringing her back to a state of abject humility again in the Assyrian invasion and captivity.*

Application: *(1) If we have become haughty before the Lord in reference to some sin we have committed, may we immediately confess it to the Lord to avoid His punishment of humiliating us to get us to repent and confess our sin! (2) If we have financially cheated someone else and thereby gained wealth, may we not haughtily boast about it, but humbly correct the wrong and repay the party we have wronged to escape God's certain punishment. (3) If God has graciously delivered us from trials and blessed us, may we REMAIN HUMBLE about it, never forgetting our humble origin, that we always remain faithful to the Lord in true respect and thanksgiving for His grace.*