

Called Out of Egypt

Call to Worship: Psalm 100

1st Scripture: Hosea 11:1-11

2nd Scripture: Matthew 2:13-15

Hymn Insert- *By Faith*

Hymn Insert- *Speak O Lord*

Hymn Insert- *In Christ Alone*

Introduction

We left off, considering the wisemen, who were led by a star to visit the toddler Jesus, at Bethlehem, about one to two years after He was born. And you'll recall that the wisemen had first gone to Jerusalem seeking information about the exact location of the young Jesus, the glorious Messiah and King of the Jews. And as they searched around for information, fear had swept through the city, not the least of which, filled the heart of King Herod, who saw this as a threat to his throne, since he was the present, appointed king over the Jews. Being an Edomite, Herod's relationship to the Jews was already, often, on shaky ground, and so, even if the prophecy concerning this Messiah were untrue, the paranoid king would have been concerned that the Jews would have sought to make Jesus king, in keeping with the prophecy.

Needless to say, Herod, who was no stranger to cruel bloodshed, sought to find out where the child Jesus was, so that he could have Him killed. And so, he sends the wisemen off to Bethlehem, charging them to report back to him, so that he could come and "worship this young king," as well. However, after finding the Christ child themselves, presenting their gifts to Him and offering Him worship, they are divinely warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, who was attempting to deceive them for the purpose of destroying the child. And so, they return to their own country, going back a different way, from the way in which they came.

Needless to say, when they fail to return to Herod, Herod is not going to be happy about this, which will lead him to take severe and horrific action to ensure that the prophecy concerning this young King, never comes to pass (which we will get to, next time, Lord willing).

This morning, and in preparation for the Lord's Supper, we will consider another relevant Old Testament prophecy, to which, Matthew turns, related to Herod's upcoming actions, which further attests to the Messianic office and calling of Jesus. Again, Matthew's Gospel is full of these prophetic nuggets of truth, as he speaks primarily to a Jewish audience. And our goal, in

part, is to chase them down in their OT context, so that we can behold their greater redemptive glory in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Fleeing to Egypt

We are told that once the wisemen had departed, an angel of the Lord had appeared to Joseph in a dream, ordering him to take Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt, as Herod would now seek to find and destroy Him. And they were to stay there for an undisclosed period of time, until God had sent word to them again, to return. [Quick Note of Application: As with Abraham, and all of God's people for that matter, though God has every answer to every question, He often calls us to wait upon Him, as an exercise of our faith; this could not have been an easy path for Joseph and his family, and to not know how long, would definitely test his faith, every waiting moment and day and month and year in *Egypt...etc*]

And so, in verse 14, we find Joseph, obedient to the call, taking his family by night to Egypt, until the death of King Herod, when God had called them back. And then, it is here that Matthew records that this event (specifically when they return to Israel) was in fulfillment of Hosea 11:1, where the prophet stated, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." And it is here, brethren, that we will travel back to Hosea, to make some critical observations, which will help us appreciate the glory of this prophetic utterance, as we consider it in its immediate (OT) and future (NT) redemptive context.

II. Hosea 11:1

Now, let us consider the immediate, OT context, within which this prophetic statement was proclaimed. As a quick preface to this consideration, brethren, let me bring forth a very important reminder about prophecy in general, which is particularly relevant to this text. When we think of prophecy, generally, we can too easily run to the future and assume that every word spoken by any given prophet must be future focused. But, it is important to recognize and understand that a prophet, in the biblical sense, was the mouth piece of God. And what made him a prophet, was the fact, that God spoke His words through the individual, via dreams, visions or even direct speech at times. That said, often times, a prophet would prophesy on

behalf of God, while not necessarily directly addressing some future event. A prophet could speak to the people about past events, present events, and of course, future events. But, speaking of future events is not what made a prophet a prophet, but rather, it was speaking on behalf of God, concerning some form of direct revelation from God, that made the prophet a prophet. That is important to understand when working through the prophetic books of Scripture.

Now, why do I say all of this? Because, while most times, prophecy would lead into some form of proclamation about the future, often times, as well, they would begin, and focus on reflecting upon past events, which had relevance to present and/or future realities. In this sense, it were as if, God Himself, were preaching through the prophet, which because it was God speaking directly through human means, validated the prophet's calling, regardless of how much of his proclamation was geared toward addressing future matters.

Now, I say this, because much of Hosea focuses on Israel's past, which of course, leads to what God is planning to do in the future. And in our immediate context, Hosea 11:1 is indeed, speaking about God's former dealings with Israel. Now, this does have a future redemptive fulfillment, which is why Matthew quotes it as such, but as we look first at its immediate relevance, we must begin by understanding its context in Hosea's time, which deals with God speaking about His gracious dealings with Israel from the past. And He does this, especially as a means of highlighting the atrocity of their present sin, idolatry and rebellion, in the light of God's continual faithfulness to His people.

And so, when Hosea here states, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son," God is reflecting upon the great kindness of His elective love and grace toward His people, from the time He has brought them out of their bondage and captivity to the Egyptians and called them to be His people, which since that time, His people have spurned over and over again.

Now, it is important to note that Hosea is also a contemporary of both Isaiah and Micah, writing during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, respectively. And like his contemporaries, he addresses the judgment coming upon both the northern kingdom of Samaria (Israel/Ephraim), as well as the southern kingdom of Judah, with a special emphasis placed on God's use of the Assyrians as His means of bringing about that judgment. But, Hosea brings a

unique angle to his prophetic utterances, in that, the primary theme of his Book is focused on how Israel has been like an adulterous “harlot” to God. In fact, the word “harlot” is used numerous times throughout the Book, to the extent that Hosea himself is commanded by God, to marry a harlot, so that he could be an illustrative sign, of how Israel has treated her God. Like the prophet Isaiah, Hosea and his family served as signs to the people.

And so, throughout the course of the Book, you will find God reminding the people of how He had graciously brought them up out of Egypt, to be His own people. After delivering them, He nursed and cared for them through the wilderness, and led them into the Promised Land, where He took them, as His Bride, as it were. But, they repeatedly played the harlot, going after the gods of the other nations, prostituting themselves out for material advantage...etc. And because of this, and because of their failure to repent in the face of God’s repeated pleas (through His prophets), certain judgment was coming.

Now, while God related to Israel as a husband does to a bride, He also uses the analogy of the father’s care for his son, to relate to how He treated Israel, especially, as He rescued them out of their bondage to the Egyptians, and adopted them as His own people, by covenant. And so, both the marriage and adoption analogies, are used by God to illustrate to His people, how He has treated them, and how they had rebelliously returned the favor. Ultimately, in the immediate context, God is preparing then, to deliver His people back into bondage, this time to the Assyrians, who represent a second Egyptian bondage, as it were. And in doing so, by separating from His wife for a time, as it were, He would ultimately restore them to their land again, taking back His unfaithful wife (all of which, was pictured in how Hosea treated his harlot wife, Gomer).

Now, as in the case of the other prophets, Hosea’s Book also comes back to this hope of restoration, while also pointing to the far greater, redemptive hope that was to come, when the Messiah should arrive. And so, in Chapter 11:1, God, through Hosea, brings out again, one of those critical reminders, declaring to Israel, the great, unconditional love and grace that God had exhibited toward Israel, when He had called the people out of Egypt to be His special people. And so, this is the immediate context of Hosea’s words, when he states, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.”

Now, the question that is obviously begged is, in what way does Jesus bring about a greater redemptive fulfillment to this text? Why does Matthew, directed by the Holy Spirit, utilize this text, in this context, to refer to Jesus? And the reason why this can become a problematic question is, on an obvious note, because as we've seen in our immediate contextual survey, the son spoken about in Hosea's context is a rebellious, idolatrous, harlotrous son, upon whom, God is preparing to bring severe judgment! It would almost seem like Matthew is doing a butcher job here, kind of like the poor eisegesis (poor interpretation) that is done by false teachers in our own day. Look at the remainder of this context again, to see why I say this. [Read verses 1-11].

II. Matthew's Use of Hosea 11:1

Now, clearly, God does not want to identify His glorious, Messianic Son with the son of this context; rebellious/adulterous Israel, does He? Well, yes. And here is the amazing beauty of this reality. You'll notice in the text that we just read, that the Lord moves from being utterly wrathful toward His people, preparing to give them over to destruction by the Assyrians, toward being overcome with pity, compelling Him to later restore the people to their own lands and homes, after a time of judgment. And so, in a very real sense, for Israel, judgment leads to grace, compassion, redemption and restoration, all in this same context.

What does this have to do with the Lord Jesus Christ? How does judgment and redemption come together in Christ? Well, we begin by understanding that Israel itself is an imperfect picture/type of Christ, who is the true Israel of God. In other words, Jesus fulfills what the nation of Israel had failed to fulfill. Jesus, the Son of God, reveals the glory of God to the world, which Israel, God's chosen son, had failed to do. And when you follow the life of Christ, you find illustrative parallels to Israel, which clearly indicate this, both in a direct and an indirect sense.

Consider a few examples. Again, Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1, for starters, shows both Israel and Christ being called out of Egypt. Following the Exodus, Israel was tested, and wandered in the wilderness for forty years. And when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He was tested for forty days...no coincidence. You'll also notice some very profound language in

Hosea, speaking of the length of Israel's coming judgment in terms that sound remarkably familiar. Come and read with me, Hosea 6:1-2. What does that sound like? Why that language? Again, there is a clear connection between Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ, showing Jesus as the pure and perfect Israel, to which, ethnic Israel pointed as an imperfect shadow. This kind of typology can be found all throughout OT history, both in a national sense, and in an individual sense, when you examine the likes of men such as Moses, Joshua, the judges, King David...etc. In the volume of the Book, it is written of Christ, such that even the historical accounting of Israel's history, also foreshadows and points to the coming glory of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Now, what of the horrific sins that are attached to Israel; the idolatry, harlotry and every other wicked vice listed throughout the prophetic Books, and especially here in Hosea 11? How do these, in any way, shape or form, come to be identified with Christ? How can they, in any way, be reckoned to His account, as belonging to Him? What connection do these gross, ungodly, violations of God's Law, have with Christ? Let me quote a few Scriptures that will clear this all up for us, brethren, especially preparing us for the Supper, this morning.

1) "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6). [*Isaiah 53 is talking about Israel, but not ethnic Israel!]

2) "For God made Him who knew no sin, to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3) "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13-14).

I think you get the point, brethren. Jesus identifies with the harlotries of His people; He identifies with the wicked, rebellious deeds of *true* Israel (His redeemed people from every nation), by bearing their sins for them. Though He was perfect and without flaw, He took our sin; our offense, our guilt, our curse, and owned them as His own, and He exchanged that for His righteousness! God treated His Son as the adulterous, idolatrous harlot, so that we could be

adopted as His beloved children. Judgment leads into mercy for a remnant, as we saw pictured in Hosea 11, because God Himself bears our judgment. Jesus goes bound, not to Egypt or Assyria, but to the cross, so that we could be set free! And that is the ultimate glory of the context of Hosea 11:1.

God successfully saves His Son from the jealous rage of King Herod, and calls Him out of Egypt, to prepare for a far worse judgment...the cross, where the far greater and far more severe wrath of God would be poured out upon His Son, for us! He says, as it were, "Step aside Herod. For, My Beloved Son has a far greater weight to bear as a man, and your petty, unrighteous wrath would only spare Him from the greater agony that is necessary, for the purchase of Israel; true Israel, called out of every nation! Indeed, I will dip my hands into the heathen filth of Egypt and every other defiled country, to call out a people from there, as I have called My Son out of Egypt! And they will follow Him into the true Promised Land!

Conclusion [Close with Hosea 14 at end]

As we prepare to take the Supper, brethren, let me leave you with one other thought, borrowed from the Apostle Paul, from Romans 11. Yes, it is the case that Christ is the true Israel of God, and we are united to Him by faith, so that we receive the eternal blessings promised to Abraham, on behalf of true Israel. God's intention was always for the whole world, right from the beginning. And yes, national Israel has fallen quite short of the glory of God, in the light of their unique and privileged calling. But, let us who are gentiles by natural descent never forget that God has grafted us into the true Israel, by grace. And therefore, let us never boast against the natural branches. In the end, no nation or people can boast. God gets all the glory. And the natural branches that were cut off can be restored, if they return to God, through Christ, their blessed Messiah. And that ought to be our prayer for Israel, as it is for the whole world. Never let grace compel you to boast against the natural branches, lest you forget where you came from. And if God did not spare the natural branches, let us not assume that the grafted in ones cannot be plucked out. The whole portrait of redemption is a portrait of grace. And at the very center of that portrait is only one Person, to which, our gaze, our faith, our confidence, our hope, and all of our praise is due. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is truly worthy! Amen!!! TLS!