
HOSEA 6: 1 "Come, and let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us to pieces, and he will heal us; he has injured us, and he will bind up our wounds.

The prophet earnestly exhorts to repentance, Hos 6:1-3. God is then introduced as very tenderly and pathetically remonstrating against the backslidings of Ephraim and Judah, Hos 6:4-11.

Verse 1

Come, and let us return unto the Lord - When God had purposed to abandon them, and they found that he had returned to his place - to his temple, where alone he could be successfully sought; they, feeling their weakness, and the fickleness, weariness, and unfaithfulness of their idols and allies, now resolve to "return to the Lord;" and, referring to what he said, Hos 5:14 : "I will tear and go away;" they say, he "hath torn, but he will heal us;" their allies had torn, but they gave them no healing. While, therefore, they acknowledge the justice of God in their punishment, they depend on his well-known mercy and compassion for restoration to life and health.

HOSEA 6: 2 After two days he will revive us. On the third day he will raise us up, and we will live before him.

Verse 2

After two days will he revive - Such is his power that in two or three days he can restore us. He can realize all our hopes, and give us the strongest token for good.

In the third day he will raise us up - In so short a time can he give us complete deliverance. These words are supposed to refer to the death and resurrection of our Lord; and it is thought that the apostle refers to them, 1Cor 15:4 : "Christ rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures;" and this is the only place in the Scriptures, i.e., of the Old Testament, where his resurrection on the third day seems to be hinted at. The original, יִקְמְנוּ yekimenu, has been translated, he will raise him up. Then they who trusted in him could believe that they should be quickened together with him.

And we shall live in his sight - His resurrection being a proof of theirs.

HOSEA 6: 3 Let us acknowledge the LORD. Let us press on to know the LORD. As surely as the sun rises, The LORD will appear. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain that waters the earth."

Verse 3

Then shall we know - We shall have the fullest evidence that we have not believed in vain.

If we follow on to know the Lord - If we continue to be as much in earnest as we now are.

His going forth - The manifestation of his mercy to our souls is as certain as the rising of the sun at the appointed time.

And he shall come unto us as the rain - As surely as the early and the latter rain come. The first, to prepare the earth for the seed; this fell in autumn: the second, to prepare the full ear for the harvest; this fell in spring. Here is strong confidence; but not misplaced, however worthless the persons were. As surely as the sun, who is now set, is running his course to arise on us in the morning, and make a glorious day after a dreary night, so surely shall the Lord come again from his place, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise on our souls with healing in his wings. He is already on his way to save us.

HOSEA 6: 4 "Ephraim, what shall I do to you? Judah, what shall I do to you? For your love is like a morning cloud, and like the dew that disappears early.

Verse 4

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? - This is the answer of the Lord to the above pious resolutions; sincere while they lasted, but frequently forgotten, because the people were fickle. Their goodness (for goodness it was while it endured) was like the morning cloud that fadeth away before the rising sun, or like the early dew which is speedily evaporated by heat. Ephraim and Judah had too much goodness in them to admit of their total rejection, and too much evil to admit of their being placed among the children. Speaking after the manner of men, the justice and mercy of God seem puzzled how to act toward them. When justice was about to destroy them for their iniquity, it was prevented by their repentance and contrition: when mercy was about to pour upon them as penitents its choicest blessings, it was prevented by their fickleness and relapse! These things induce the just and merciful God to exclaim, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?" The only thing that could be done in such a case was that which God did.

HOSEA 6: 5 Therefore I have cut them to pieces with the prophets; I killed them with the words of my mouth. Your judgements are like a flash of lightning.

Verse 5

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets - I have sent my prophets to testify against their fickleness. They have smitten them with the most solemn and awful threatenings; they have, as it were, slain them by the words of my mouth. But to what purpose?

Thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth - Instead of **אור יצא ומשפטיך** *umispateycha* or *yetse*, "and thy judgments a light that goeth forth," the versions in general have read **אור ומשפטי** *umishpati keor*, "and my judgment is as the light." The final **כ** caph in the common reading has by mistake been taken from **אור** *aur*, and joined to **משפטי** *mishpati*; and thus turned it from the singular to the plural number, with the postfix **כ** cha. The proper reading is, most probably, "And my judgment is as the light going forth." It shall be both evident and swift; alluding both to the velocity and splendour of light.

HOSEA 6: 6 For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Verse 6

I desired mercy, and not sacrifice - I taught them righteousness by my prophets; for I desired mercy. I was more willing to save than to destroy; and would rather see them full of penitent and holy resolutions, than behold them offering the best and most numerous victims upon my altar. See Mat 9:13.

HOSEA 6: 7 But they, like Adam, have broken the covenant. They were unfaithful to me, there.

Verse 7

But they like men (אָדָם keadam, "like Adam") have transgressed the covenant - They have sinned against light and knowledge as he did. This is sense, the other is scarcely so. There was a striking similarity in the two cases. Adam, in Paradise, transgressed the commandment, and I cast him out: Israel, in possession of the promised land, transgressed my covenant, and I cast them out, and sent them into captivity.

HOSEA 6: 8 Gilead is a city of those who work iniquity; it is stained with blood.

Verse 8

Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity - In this place Jacob and Laban made their covenant, and set up a heap of stones, which was called Galeed, the heap of testimony; and most probably idolatry was set up here. Perhaps the very heap became the object of superstitious adoration.

HOSEA 6: 9 As gangs of robbers wait to ambush a man, so the company of priests murder on the path toward Shechem, committing shameful crimes.

Verse 9

As troops of robbers - What a sad picture is this of the state of the priesthood! The country of Gilead was infamous for its robberies and murders. The idolatrous priests there formed themselves into companies, and kept possession of the roads and passes; and if they found any person going to Jerusalem to worship the true God, they put him to death. The reason is given: -

For they commit lewdness - They are gross idolaters.

HOSEA 6: 10 In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing. There is prostitution in Ephraim. Israel is defiled.

Verse 10

I have seen a horrible thing - That is, the idolatry that prevailed in Israel to such a degree that the whole land was defiled.

HOSEA 6: 11 "Also, Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you, when I restore the fortunes of my people.

Verse 11

O Judah, he hath set a harvest for thee - Thou also hast transgressed; thy harvest will come; thou shalt be reaped down and sent into captivity. The sickle is already thrust in. That which thou hast sowed shalt thou reap. They who sow unto the flesh shall reap corruption.

When I returned the captivity of my people - Bp. Newcome translates, "Among those who lead away the captivity of my people." There is thy harvest; they who have led Israel into captivity shall lead thee also into the same. The Assyrians and Babylonians were the same kind of people; equally idolatrous, equally oppressive, equally cruel. From the common reading some suppose this to be a promise of return from captivity. It is true that Judah was gathered together again and brought back to their own land, but the majority of the Israelites did not return, and are not now to be found.