

unconcerned that it is the covenant of the ever Holy, Faithful One they are breaking (cf. Lev. 19:2; 21:8; Isa. 6:3; Num. 23:19; I Sam. 15:29). Jehovah does not change. He will keep His word—His threats as well as His promises!

### QUIZ

1. What does "walking after Jehovah" mean?
2. Why do we say this passage is a Messianic passage?
3. What is wrong with the English version of verse 12? Two things!

### LOVE REBUKING

### REQUITTING— EPHRAIM HAS PROVOKED

TEXT: 12:1-6

- 1 Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he continually multiplieth lies and desolation; and they make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried into Egypt.
- 2 Jehovah hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.
- 3 In the womb he took his brother by the heel; and in his manhood he had power with God:
- 4 yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him at Beth-el, and there he spake with us,
- 5 even Jehovah, the God of hosts; Jehovah is his memorial name.
- 6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep kindness and justice, and wait for thy God continually.

### QUERIES

- a. When did Israel make a covenant with Assyria?
- b. Why refer to Jacob's birth and manhood?
- c. What is Jehovah's memorial name?

### PARAPHRASE

Israel is fattening itself for the slaughter by vainly seeking to sustain itself on deceitful military alliances with Assyria and Egypt. Judah, too, will reap the destruction it has sown by sinning against

Jehovah—Jehovah will render justice. If this covenant people had only followed the example of their forefather, Jacob! Jacob was so zealous to appropriate God's promised blessing that while he was still in the womb of his mother he struggled in order to obtain the spiritual birthright by grasping the heel of the first-born, Esau. Then, when Jacob was full-grown, he struggled with all his might, wrestling with God and, through intense prayer and supplication, he conquered and won the blessing of Jehovah. And so it was that Jacob found favor in the heart of God at Bethel. Jacob's exemplary faith and God's covenant blessing there at Bethel applies to us, for we are the children of Jacob, if we follow in the steps of Jacob's faith. We may have confidence that God will bless our faithfulness as He did Jacob's, because He is the God who commands all the forces of heaven, both visible and invisible and rules the universe with unrestricted omnipotence. He is the Great, I AM! He is the Rock of our salvation, and besides Him there is no god! Therefore, O Israel, repent! Return, by faith, to a vital, meaningful fellowship with God. Let this fellowship be expressed in your every-day living through kindness, justice and longsuffering, by faith in the faithfulness of God!

### SUMMARY

Israel and Judah's sin brings the just punishment of the faithful God upon this generation of covenant people. The example of their forefather, Jacob, should have led them to lives of faith and righteousness.

### COMMENT

v. 1 EPHRAIM FEEDETH ON WIND . . . MULTIPLIETH LIES . . . MAKE A COVENANT WITH ASSYRIA The double indictment of God continues from the last verse of the preceding chapter (11:12). The prophet continues his pronouncement of judgment upon both Israel and Judah.

The word "feedeth" is literally, "*pastures*" or "shepherds." Israel strives eagerly after, or pursues, what is empty or vain. The east wind in Palestine is a fierce, hot wind blowing in off the Arabian desert which dries up everything in its path and makes desolate. Israel pursues that which will bring about its own destruction. Israel is fattening itself for slaughter by living on deceit and lies. During the reign of Hoshea (731-722 B.C.) Israel attempted to liberate itself from the oppression of Assyria by means of a treaty with Egypt (II Kings 17:4). Hoshea sent splendid presents (perhaps olive oil)

to the king of Egypt, to bring him over to his side, and induce him to send him assistance against the king of Assyria, although Hoshea had bound himself by a sacred treaty to submit to the sovereignty of the latter. Undoubtedly there were lies and deceitful arrangements made on both sides, for in order to keep up appearances of alliance with both sides (each bitter rivals for world supremacy), Israel would have to resort to deception, falsehood and intrigue. Such a policy could only end in self destruction and desolation. Such duplicity not only aroused the wrath of their allies, but it was also open rebellion toward God who had demonstrated over and over again His faithfulness in giving them victory, protecting and sustaining them. Furthermore God had commanded that they make no such alliances.

v. 2 JEHOVAH HATH ALSO A CONTROVERSY WITH JUDAH . . .

Judah too is condemned. Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah and during both their lives the good king Uzziah king of Judah, had died to be succeeded by Jotham and then Ahaz, both faithless and unrighteous men who led the people of Judah into the same kind of sin as Israel had been led into. Judah will know God's holy justice. She will get what she deserves. Whatever Judah has sown, so shall she reap.

v. 3-5 IN THE WOMB HE TOOK HIS BROTHER BY THE HEEL . . .

HAD POWER . . . PREVAILED . . . FOUND HIM AT BETH-EL . . . THERE HE SPAKE WITH US, EVEN JEHOVAH . . . "Jacob," evidently referring to all the covenant people (both Israel and Judah), deserves God's *justice*. But, "Jacob" (both nations of covenant people) may have God's *mercy* if they would exercise the same zealous faith to obtain it that their progenitor, Jacob, exercised in obtaining the birthright and the subsequent covenant blessings from Jehovah. Jacob's conduct in obtaining the birthright is definitely held up here as a lesson of earnest striving for the spiritual treasures God has to offer the faithful and diligent. Not only his diligence in obtaining the birthright (whereas Esau, to whom it could have belonged, despised it and preferred physical food), but his persistence and endurance when he was tested by God obtained for him a covenant blessing from God. The test mentioned is apparently the "wrestling with God" (Gen. 32:22ff). It was here Jacob made supplication with loud crying and tears and was heard for his godly fear (cf. Heb. 5:7-8 where the true Jacob wrestled and prevailed). Thus humbly, but persistently, Jacob "wrestled" with God in prayer (probably wrestling more with "self" than with God) and won the victory. As proof of Jacob's victory, Hosea cites Jacob's experience recorded in Genesis 35:9ff where, in Bethel, Jacob not only had his own

name Israel confirmed, but the promise made to his forefather, Abraham, was given to him and he was declared to be the chosen of God.

What God said to Jacob there at Bethel, God meant to be applied to all of Jacob's posterity, the spiritual seed of Abraham. This means, of course, all Jews descended from Jacob until the time of Christ and all Christians afterward who would walk in the same steps of faith as Jacob (and Abraham) walked (cf. Rom. 4:11-17, etc.). All such faithful are members of the kingdom of God and recipients of the covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (which promises find their reality, full-blossomed perfection, in Christ and His church).

The phrase ". . . God of hosts" is intended to portray the God of Israel as sovereign of the universe. He commands the forces of the whole universe, whether visible or invisible. He is omnipotent! This is the God with whom Israel has to do! (cf. I Sam. 1:3; 17:45; II Kings 6:16; II Chron. 32:7; Rom. 8:31-39). We take this opportunity to quote at length from *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill C. Tenney, on the article entitled "JEHOVAH:"

"JEHOVAH . . . the English rendering of the Hebrew tetragram YHWH, one of the names of God (Exod. 17:15). Its original pronunciation is unknown. The Jews took seriously the third commandment . . . (Exod. 20:7) and so, to keep from speaking the holy name carelessly, around 300 B.C. they decided not to pronounce it at all; but whenever in reading they came to it they spoke the word *adbonai* which means 'Lord.' This usage was carried into the LXX where the sacred name is rendered 'Kurios,' i.e. Lord. Consequently in the KJV, Lord occurs instead of Jehovah, whereas ASV renders the name 'Jehovah.' When the vowel points were added to the Hebrew consonantal text, the Massorettes (Jewish scribes) inserted into the Hebrew consonantal text the vowels for *adbonia*. The sacred name is derived from the verb 'to be,' and so implies that God is eternal ('Before Abraham was, I AM) and that he is the Absolute, i.e. the Uncaused One. The name 'Jehovah' belongs especially to Him when He is dealing with His own, while 'God' is used more when dealing with Gentiles. See for instance II Chronicles 18:31 . . .

"There are ten combinations of the word 'Jehovah' in the O.T. . . . *Jehovah-ropheka*, 'Jehovah that healeth thee' (Exod. 15:26); *Jehovah-meqaddeshkem*, 'Jehovah who sanctifieth you' (Exod. 31:13); *Jehovah-tsabaoth*, 'Jehovah of hosts' (I Sam. 1:3); *Jehovah-elyon*, 'Jehovah Most High' (Ps. 7:17); *Jehovah-*

*roi*, 'Jehovah, my Shepherd' (Ps. 23:1); *Jehovah-jireh*, 'Jehovah will provide' (Gen. 22:14); *Jehovah-nissi*, 'Jehovah is my banner' (Exod. 17:15); *Jehovah-shalom*, 'Jehovah is peace' (Judg. 6:24); *Jehovah-shammah*, 'Jehovah is there' (Ezek. 48:35m); and *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, 'Jehovah is our righteousness' (Jer. 33:6,16)."

Jehovah gave His name as a memorial (cf. Ex. 3:15; Psa. 102:12; 135:13). This means, of course, that Jehovah was the name by which Israel was to remember God. The name, "I AM THAT I AM," was to cause Israel to recognize and remember that their God was Self-existent, Eternal, Unchangeable and Immutable. He is from "everlasting to everlasting" (cf. Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Isa. 9:6; 26:4; 40:28; 63:16; Jer. 10:10; Psa. 90:2; 932:2; Micah 5:2). Such a God would never let one of His promises go unfulfilled! His word is inviolate! His name memorialized in the minds of the faithful all the past historical demonstrations of His unchangeableness and fulfilled promises.

v. 6 THEREFORE TURN THOU TO THY GOD: KEEP KINDNESS AND JUSTICE . . . The "therefore" refers back to the immediately preceding verses. These six verses form a very concise homily in logical sequence. First, the sins of the covenant people and the warning of judgment; second, the example of Jacob's faithfulness and God's blessing of Jacob; third, the nature of God; finally, the conclusion, an exhortation to repent based on the three reasons above. The main reason for repentance is to be found in God's nature, for each of the above points have their bases in the nature of God's unchangeableness. This is the leading idea of all the prophetic literature, indeed of the entire Bible—THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IN KEEPING HIS WORD!! On the basis of that faithfulness man may respond toward the will of such a God in full trust and faith and enjoy complete peace and harmony in fellowship with the Unchangeable God! In a world of dissolution, disappointment, inconstancy, temporalness, what a blessed peace comes to the soul who trusts in a God who has historically demonstrated His Immutability, His eternal love! The fruits of such trust are kindness and justice.

## QUIZ

1. How did Ephraim "feed" on wind?
2. What connection did Israel's alliances with Assyria and Egypt have with the "multiplication of lies and desolation?"
3. Why was Judah to be punished?

4. How does Jacob's diligence to obtain the birthright become an example to Israel?
5. What does the name "Jehovah" mean?
6. Upon what basis does Hosea call for the covenant people to turn to God?
7. What should be the fruits of their turning?

## REQUITING— EPHRAIM HAS PROVOKED

TEXT: 12:7-14

- 7 He is a trafficker, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.
- 8 And Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth: in all my labors they shall find in me no iniquity that were sin.
- 9 But I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt; I will yet again make thee to dwell in tents, as in the days of the solemn feast.
- 10 I have also spoken unto the prophets, and I have multiplied visions; and by the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes.
- 11 Is Gilead iniquity? they are altogether false; in Gilgal they sacrifice bullocks; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field.
- 12 And Jacob fled into the field of Aram, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.
- 13 And by a prophet Jehovah brought Israel up out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.
- 14 Ephraim hath provoked to anger most bitterly; therefore shall his blood be left upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

### QUERIES

- a. How is Israel a "trafficker?"
- b. When did Israel "again . . . dwell in tents?"
- c. Why mention Jacob's servitude for a wife?

### PARAPHRASE

Israel has become Canaan, seeking its advantage in deceit and wrong because, like a fraudulent Canaanite merchant, it has attempted to become great by cheating. Israel is even proud of its unrighteousness, rationalizing that the wealth they have acquired justifies the means taken

to obtain it. Let Me remind you, I am the God who led you from Egypt and to this moment I have been the source of all your prosperity. It appears that the only way you will recognize My sovereignty is for Me once again lead you through a wilderness experience where you are totally dependent upon Me. I proved to you over and over that I am the source of your strength by sending prophets to make known My gracious will and exhort you to repentance. I have sent the prophets to preach and teach in every way possible to lead you back to My will. The whole land, from Gilead on the east, to Gilgal on the west, is rotten. Its spiritual worthlessness and wickedness will result in physical destruction and oblivion. I did not even make Jacob's lot as easy as I have made yours. Jacob became a fugitive, served virtually in slavery many years to obtain a wife, and worked at the menial task of tending cattle. Contrast Jacob's lonely flight with your being led by a prophet; contrast Jacob's guarding of the cattle with your being guarded by Me through the prophet Moses. Israel, your failure to remember this and your rebellion against My loving kindnesses has provoked Me to righteous anger against you. You stand guilty and condemned for all your violent, evil, bloody crimes. You will not repent. Therefore justice will be done. Your sentence will be hastily executed.

### SUMMARY

Israel's pride has caused her to delude herself. She has forgotten, deliberately, that Jehovah is the source of her very being and of her present wealth. God prepares to teach her again to trust in Him.

### COMMENT

v. 7-8 HE IS A TRAFFICKER . . . AND . . . SAID, SURELY I AM BECOME RICH . . . FIND IN ME NO . . . SIN . . . The ASV has in the margin of verse 7, "As for Canaan . . ." and also in the margin, "a Canaanite . . ." The word translated *trafficker* is literally, *merchant*, which is the common, or appellative signification of the Hebrew word in the text here. Israel, far from being like the spiritually-minded Jacob, is like the crafty, cheating Canaanite (Phoenician) merchant or trader. The picture we get of Israel here and throughout the history of the northern kingdom is that her driving ambition was to become wealthy and powerful and she was not concerned with the ethics she used in attaining her goal. In fact, verse 8 represents Israel as an ethical relativist. She believes that the end justifies the means. She thinks she is rich and powerful, and this, after all, is what counts. So who would believe she has committed any wrong that could be called a sin. All's

fair in love and war and making money—according to Israel; but not according to God's commandments given to Israel. Cheating and robbery were strictly forbidden (cf. Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:13-16; Lev. 6:2-4; Deut. 24:14).

Ethical relativism (sometimes known as "Pragmatism") is the philosophy which says, "Whatever works is true and right." Since one thing or one action may work profitably one day and not the next, truth and right can never be absolute. Truth may change at any moment. It becomes relative to every situation. Of course, if there is no absolute standard of right and wrong then each individual becomes the arbitrary judge of what is right and wrong for what may work for one person does not necessarily work for another. Furthermore, who makes the decision as to what "works?" In other words, is material prosperity the highest "what works" to aim for? This is what Israel had decided. What else can man conclude when he will not accept the divine revelation from God that there are spiritual things much more important? Actually, as Paul says in I Corinthians 15, if Christ is not raised—if the apostolic message is not divinely authoritative, therefore false—man is silly to practice any religion or any code of ethics except hedonism (self-indulgence, self-interest). But, on the other hand, if the apostolic message (and we should include the entire Bible) is an authoritatively revealed will of an Omnipotent God, there are values much higher than "things."

Israel's problem is well summed up in the problem the church of Laodicea. Cf. Revelation 3:14ff: ". . . Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see."

v. 9-10 . . . I WILL YET AGAIN MAKE THEE TO DWELL IN TENTS . . . The people have deluded themselves into believing they are responsible for their own prosperity. God reminds them, in the first phrase of this verse, that He has been Israel's source of origin (when He formed them into a nation and rescued them from Egyptian slavery) and He has been the source of all their successes since that time until the present. Since they will not listen to mere words spoken by a prophet, God will cause them to experience once again a period of dislocation, wandering and testing through the captivity. This experience has as its goal calling Israel to penitent trust in Jehovah as they had in



the wilderness under Moses. All their riches, power and even their land will be taken away. Perhaps then they will repent and turn to God in full trust—since they will have found there is no security in wealth or power. The "dwelling in tents" refers to the ceremonies connected with the Feast of Tabernacles (Num. 14:33) which was to call to their remembrance the shielding and sheltering care and protection of God in their wandering through the great and terrible wilderness (cf. Lev. 23:42-43).

In verse 10 God reminds them of all the intermediaries He sent to lead them, admonish them, teach them and care for them like shepherds tenderly caring for a flock of helpless sheep. The prophets, from Moses to Malachi, were given and used every means at God's command to turn the people of Israel in God's direction. Visions, miracles, predictions of the future and expositions of the Law were multiplied. Vividly arresting figures of speech, symbols, parables, metaphors, allegories, types, object-lessons were all used. These people could never claim lack of quantity or quality of communication as an excuse before God's judgment bar. And, as the writer of the Hebrew epistle puts it, ". . . if the message declared by angles was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will."

v. 11 IS GILEAD INIQUITY? . . . IN GILGAL THEY SACRIFICE BULLOCKS . . . Gilead and Gilgal represent the two halves of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Gilead represents the land to the east of the Jordan which belongs to Israel and Gilgal represents the land to the west of the Jordan. The word translated "iniquity" is literally *worthlessness*. The moral decay of the whole nation, brought on by idolatry, will lead to physical disruption and destruction. The predictive present is used in this verse. The prophet looks into the future and sees it as present—"their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field." This is what is to happen to their altars to idolatry.

v. 12 JACOB FLED INTO THE FIELD OF ARAM . . . Earlier Jacob was used as an example of the diligence for spiritual things which God expected Israel to imitate. Now Jacob's long years as a fugitive, slaving away at such menial tasks as herding cattle, all the distress and affliction he suffered in those years, in made to contrast with the many years of prosperity, peace and security the nation of Israel has enjoyed under the protection of God. Jacob had endured his affliction and served the

Lord faithfully and in gratitude. Israel, the nation, instead of thanking the Lord for their comfort and prosperity by love and faithful devotedness to Him, spurned His love, and went after other gods.

v. 13 . . . AND BY A PROPHET WAS HE PRESERVED . . . No such helpers were given to Jacob. God sent prophets to light the paths of Israel, the nation, by the proclamation of His Word. God demonstrated visibly, many times over, by miracles and predictions through the prophets, His power and His purposes. But it was not given to Jacob, to such an extent, to have the power and purpose of God demonstrated visibly. The nation had privileges and possibilities far beyond those of their "father" Jacob. God had every right to expect of the nation at least as much faithfulness as Jacob had manifested—even more. "To whom soever much is given, of him shall much be required."

v. 14 EPHRAIM HATH PROVOKED TO ANGER MOST BITTERLY . . . Israel's indifference to God's love gave provocation to God's righteous indignation. Unrequited love justly deserves anger. The perfect love of God, when spurned and mocked, merits perfect justice and righteous retribution. If men are moral, if God is moral, if the universe is governed by moral principles, then to repudiate the loving, protecting, sustaining will of the omnipotent God is to morally and justly deserve and deliberately choose the only reasonable and logical alternative—the indignation and wrath of the One spurned. A deliberate, moral choice of wrong can only result in deliberate, moral rejection of good. The crucial question is: Has it been sufficiently demonstrated, historically and pragmatically, or empirically, that God exists, that the Bible is His inerrantly recorded Will for man, that Jesus Christ is His Son, and does the Bible claim to be the exclusive and ultimate "Good?" The answer is now, and was then, unequivocally, YES! Therefore, man, the moral creature, must make his own decision. He is "master of his fate." If man decides against the empirically demonstrated and exclusively ultimate Good, "his blood shall be left upon him." If man will not, by faith and obedience toward God, allow God to forgive his sins, then man must pay the penalty for his own sins. If man chooses evil and rebellion against God (which makes man to be in disharmony with his created purpose) then this is what God will permit man to have—for all eternity.

## QUIZ

1. Why use the word "trafficker" in place of "Canaanite?" in verse 7.
2. What was Israel's ethical philosophy?
3. What is "ethical relativism?" Do people practice this today?

4. Why is ethical relativism impractical?
5. How and why did God intend to "make them to dwell in tents" again?
6. How extensive were the opportunities for Israel to know the will of God?
7. Does the person who deliberately chooses evil deserve the wrath of God? Why?

## REQUITING— GOD WILL PUNISH

TEXT: 13:1-8

- 1 When Ephraim spake, there was trembling; he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.
- 2 And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, even idols according to their own understanding, all of them the work of craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.
- 3 Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the dew that passeth early away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the threshing-floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.
- 4 Yet I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no god but me, and besides me there is no savior.
- 5 I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.
- 6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.
- 7 Therefore am I unto them as a lion; as a leopard will I watch by the way;
- 8 I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart; and there will I devour them like a lioness; the wild beast shall tear them.

### QUERIES

- a. Why did they "kiss the calves?"
- b. How is Israel to be "like the dew that passeth early away?"
- c. What is the "caul of their heart?"

### PARAPHRASE

It used to be when Israel spoke, her neighbor-nations trembled because Israel was powerful and influential. But Israel let his pride destroy him. He spurned Jehovah God and rebelled against Him, wor-