

11:1-4

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt ^aI called My ^bson. We should point out that this is, in Matthew’s mind, a prophecy, ultimately, of Jesus’ journey from Egypt (Matthew 2). This text, however, is proof that Old Testament passages (such as Exodus 3-4 and Proverbs 30) showed that the nation of Israel was the “son of God” in the mind of the Old Testament Jew—and that’s if they didn’t see the King of Israel as the Son of God (Psalm 2:7-12). ...**4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. ^gI stooped and fed them.**

11:7-9

8 “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? These are, we find out from Genesis 14:2, sister “cities of the plain” with Sodom who were destroyed. **My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.** Perhaps the only thing more touching than a God Who stoops to feed His people (11:4) is one Who is crushed by a people that simply don’t wish to be held, but are rather “bent on backsliding.” God is amazed that they seem equally as “bent” on being destroyed.

11:9-11

I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror. 10 “They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. The LORD had previously threatened to come upon them as a lion. Now it is not a threat; it is rather a comfort. **When He roars, Then His sons shall come trembling from the west; 11 They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, ^mLike a dove from the land of Assyria.** Off they went like a silly dove (7:11), and now they shall return in like flimsy manner. **And I will let them dwell in their houses,” Says the LORD.**

11:12

“Ephraim has encircled Me with lies, And the house of Israel with deceit; But Judah still walks with God,

Even with the Holy One who is faithful. Interesting that the writer speaks of Judah being faithful with the word **still** only to draw a line to the **faithful Holy One**. To be fair, the translations are split many ways over the correct rendering of this passage. The first take away is that some Hebrew can have equally valid and totally opposite interpretations.

Either way, the emphasis is on God’s faithfulness because if the correct rendering is “Judah is faithful to the Holy One,” it is only because The Holy One is first faithful. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 says “faithful is He Who calls you Who also will do it.” So Judah is called to be faithful and because God faithfully calls them and then equips their faithfulness. So either way, the emphasis is on God’s faithfulness.

How do we pick that a rendering (or translation) that places **Holy** and **faithful** with God? We pick it with aid of the context. Verse 9 certainly poses God as restraining Himself from doing

^aMatt. 2:15

^bEx. 4:22, 23

^gEx. 16:32; Ps. 78:25

^mHos. 7: 11

something that He would be reasonably expected to do. Why would God be distinct from the actions of his wayward bride (**holy**) and eventually take her back? Because He is **faithful**.

Having now chosen to consider our faithful God Who calls us to faithfulness and equips us to be so, we are to believe the truth of 11:9-11 after the calamitous news of 11:5-8 because of the truth of 11:1-4.

In what way, then, has this **Holy One** shown that He is **faithful**?

1. He rescued a people from Egypt (11:1-3).
2. He sustained them in the wilderness (11:4).

One who is faithful Why do we believe that He will not return “in wrath” (11:9)? Because He is **faithful**. Moses probably originated this pattern of review of God’s dealings (Psalm 90:1-2), rehearsal of Israel’s condition (Psalm 90:3-11), and returning of the Faithful God’s compassion (Psalm 90:13-17).

And quite honestly, we see God’s faithfulness as a reason to worship, and this faithfulness is not arbitrary. It is based on a covenant (Hosea 8:1):

The idea of worship as celebration is governed by what is being celebrated – being in “covenant fellowship with the sovereign and holy triune God.” The focus is certainly on the nature of the sovereign God of glory; but the glory of it all to us is that we have been brought into covenant with this God. Contemplation of such a God without a covenant might inspire awe and wonder but not celebration; and celebration of a covenant without any perception of God, with whom the covenant is made, would not inspire much awe and wonder.

This word covenant may not be familiar to some people. It refers to a treaty, a pact, or an agreement made between two or more parties. A covenant is usually based on some significant event in history and includes both the benefits and the obligations of the parties who enter into the agreement. People often entered into such treaties with other people, promising by solemn oath through ritual sacrifice to abide by the agreement. God used this well-known form to assure his people that he was their God and they were his people. So at Sinai, for example, he established a covenant with Israel based on the fact that he had redeemed them from bondage. By doing so he entered into a unique relationship with them. In that covenant he made promises to them, promises that were both temporal and eternal, and he swore by himself to fulfill them; but he also set forth obligations that they were to meet if they wanted to be his people and to enjoy his benefits. The agreement was then sealed by the shedding of blood in a sacrificial ritual.¹

Mark 14:24-25, then, give us the covenant and the return of the King. We New Testament believers rejoice in a covenant-keeping God that says “I know who you are, but I know what I said, and I will return in such a time so as to bring glory to myself and rejoicing from you that will bring even greater glory to myself.”

¹Allen P. Ross *Recalling the Hope of Glory* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 69.

So if it seems as though God has departed from His covenant promise, child of God, may I be ever-so-quick to remind us that God is protecting us and strengthening us as only a covenant husband can do:

[Satan] hates the Lord's people, grudges them all their privileges and all their comforts; and will do what he can to disquiet them, because he cannot prevail against them. And though the Lord sets [bounds that, to his rage, he cannot pass], and limits him both as to manner and time, he is often pleased...to humble [his people] them; to show them what is in their hearts, to make them truly sensible of their immediate and absolute dependence upon himself, and to quicken them to watchfulness and prayer.²

What therefore may seem as a horrible spell of “fallenness” among God’s people is nothing more than God’s Hallowed Name being highly displayed. It’s position above all beckons those who claim to follow Him to rise and grasp of the quality of which only the Spirit of God can work in our hearts. Can we be as debauched as these of Hosea’s day? No. We are at a great advantage as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

²John Newton *The Works of John Newton, Volume 1* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2015), 155; in a letter to an acquaintance on “temptation.”