

“MY YOKE IS EASY”

Hosea 11:1-7

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INTRODUCTION

My parents were not perfect; were yours? But one thing of which I am certain: the **really loved me**. However, there is one parent who is perfect—GOD. He is our heavenly Father and He never makes mistakes.

God is also Israel’s parent. He has always loved Israel and still does. In fact, one commentator has commented: “Is not the miraculous survival of this people the best proof of such loving solicitude?” (Cohen, p. 42).

God loves Berean; He has “birthed” us and has guided us, and will continue to direct our way. How faithful will Berean be to Him? God has birthed you—and has guided your Christian life and will continue to do so. How faithful will you be to Him?

YOU OWE EVERYTHING TO THE Lord—Do not be stubborn; be faithful to Him.

I. PARENTAL LOVE

A. Called out of Egypt (1) [*Compare Mt. 2:15—Relation of this verse to Jesus’ life*]

Election—salvation; Israel and Messiah viewed together; they are chosen in Him.

B. Trained to Walk (3a)

There is no more tender picture than this. *A parent bears with a child’s stumbling, awkward ways. When the child becomes weary of its first strenuous attempts, the **father** is quick to note and take the child in his arms again.* (See Dt. 1:31—father’s action). [Change from 1st person to 3rd person in 3a & 3b is common in Hebrew; prophet speaks for Yahweh in 3b.]

C. Healed of Weaknesses (3c) (Ex. 15:26). Israel’s Father was also its physician!

This was more than Moses could do (Nu. 11:12).

D. Strengthened and Enabled (4a)

1. “Cords of a man”—treating “humanely”—not like an animal. **Used especially with children “weak on their feet” (Keil)—contrasted with ropes used for animals (Ps. 32:9).**

God “drew” them—not dragged, drove, or pulled them. **There is more power in love than in force.**

2. “Bonds of Love”—Loving gentleness. Cf. Jer. 31:3—“Drawn you with everlasting love.”

E. Lightened Yoke (4b)—Taking off the yoke so that the animal can eat better; the figure is of a considerate owner and his animal who works for him. God saw to it that the yoke did not press too heavily on them. He was with them in their troubles (cf. Lev. 26:13—took off the Egyptian yoke.)

Is the “yoke” the Law? The Lord “lifts it up” in the sense of “easing the burden, “changing its position;” making it more comfortable, lifting off the jaws so they could eat. (Laetsch, Keil) The Lord makes the keeping of the Law *both possible and more enjoyable*—*motivating them to love Him in return; He gives them the means of grace (sacrifice and forgiveness, and even the feasts wherein they could rejoice in God’s gracious gifts. **Notice even in the NT Jesus still has a “yoke.”***

His “yoke is easy and His burden light.” See Mt. 11:28-30.

F. Nourished (4c)—bent down (alternate reading)—gentle humbleness—in order to gently feed the one who had been working so hard under difficult circumstances—their past in Egypt and then in the wilderness. This shows God’s “solicitude” toward Israel during their wilderness journey etc. **God’s care enabled them to survive.**

Fed with

- Spiritual Food: *forgiveness, sacrifices, miracles, etc.*
- 2) *Literal food.*

G. God’s messengers the prophets gave instructions 2a)

1. God sent many messengers with many messages (II K. 17:13; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; Zech. 1:4)
2. These messengers called them back to “the One on high”—literally, “unto the height” (7b)

II. CHILDISH STUBBORNNESS

A. Turned the opposite way (2)

1. Rebellion was equal to the effort of loving instruction

Israel’s departure from God was not to something better—senselessness!

God’s love had never been founded upon human merit or goodness; He persisted in going after His people. NEVER WAS A HUMAN PARENT SO SINNED AGAINST AS WAS GOD!

2. Israel listened to other “advisors”—the Baals

3. Israel gave their energy and money to false “parents”—“sacrificing and incense”

B. Refused to Return (5c)—despite “powerful effort” on the Lord’s part

C. Natural bent toward Rebellion (7a)—they were “obdurate”, determined to turn from God (Wood, 213). The verb has the idea of “hung” or “hung up”—used for the impaling of bodies upon posts. **To say that this means they are “set in their ways” is speaking mildly!**

- D. None exalt the Lord—lit., “he will not lift up.” (7c). This means either that”
 - They won’t respond to the prophets and lift up or be lifted up to the exalted God mentioned in 7b, or
 - They won’t exalt God—acknowledge Him for who He is.
- E. Followed bad advice—“counsels” (6c); their plans *had the opposite effect—did not deliver them, but **ruined them***. They had followed worldly wisdom. See Ps. 5:10.

III. STRONG CHASTISEMENT (5-6)

- A. Put under the Authority and Yoke of Assyria—not Egypt as in the past (5)
This is not a contradiction with 8:13 & 9:3—but rather a clarification; the “Egyptian captivity” mentioned in those verses is “an Egyptian-like captivity”. The present verse clarifies the situation. This verse makes a sharp contrast:
 - “He”—the nation as a whole—will **NOT** return to the land of Egypt.
 - But Assyria—**HE** will be his king.”
 1. Ruled over—harshly, not lovingly.
 2. Not trained, healed, strengthened, or nourished.
- B. Defeated by Enemy armies (6)
 1. “The whirling sword” against their cities
 2. The demolishing of their defenses: “their gate bars” (6b)
 3. Their consummation (6c)—*God had “fed” them (v. 4); now the sword “feeds on them.”*

CONCLUSION

“O how He loves you and me; O how He loves you and me.
 He gave His life; what more can He give?
 O how he loves you; O how He loves me;
 O how He loves you and me.”

That is the kind of divine parent we have. What have you given him in return?
 Oh how stubborn we are! How we turn from Him and seek our own way.
 Yes, He will lovingly chasten us and seek to bring us back.

Remember what His love is like! Remember what you have lost.
 Come back to Him. Turn from your idols. “Immerse yourself in His loving care.

YOU OWE EVERYTHING TO THE Lord—Do not be stubborn; be faithful to Him.