

Hosea 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Analysis

This prophecy promises dramatic reversal: 'Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.' Despite coming judgment (northern kingdom's destruction by Assyria, 722 BC), God promises ultimate restoration. The promise 'as the sand of the sea' echoes God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 22:17), emphasizing covenant faithfulness despite Israel's unfaithfulness. The transformation from 'not my people' (Lo-ammi, Hosea 1:9) to 'sons of the living God' (בָּנִי אֱלֹהִים, benei el-chai) represents complete restoration of covenant relationship. Paul quotes this verse in Romans 9:25-26, applying it to Gentile inclusion in God's people through Christ. What began as promise to Israel finds expanded fulfillment in the church, where both Jews and Gentiles become God's children through faith (Galatians 3:26-29). The phrase 'sons of the living God' emphasizes intimate relationship—not merely servants but family, adopted as children through Christ (Romans 8:14-17, Ephesians 1:5).

Historical Context

Hosea prophesied to northern Israel (Ephraim) during the 8th century BC, decades before Assyrian conquest scattered the ten tribes. Despite their spiritual adultery and coming judgment, God promised future restoration. Historically, the northern kingdom never recovered as a political entity after 722 BC—the 'ten lost tribes' were assimilated into surrounding nations. Yet God's promise stood. Paul's application to Gentiles shows how divine promises often find unexpected fulfillment. The 'not my people' becoming 'my people' describes the gospel breaking ethnic boundaries, bringing outsiders into covenant relationship through Christ. This demonstrates that God's covenant purposes transcend ethnic Israel, ultimately creating one new humanity in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16) where natural and spiritual descendants of Abraham together inherit promises.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's faithfulness to promises despite human unfaithfulness encourage your confidence in His covenant love?
2. What does it mean to be adopted as 'sons of the living God' rather than merely servants or subjects?
3. How should Gentile inclusion in God's promises through Christ shape your understanding of the church's identity?

Interlinear Text

וְיִהְיֶה	מִסְפָּר	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	כַּח	וְלֹא	כַּח	וְלֹא
H1961	H4557	H1121	H3478	H2344			H3220
וְיִהְיֶה	אֲשֶׁר	לֹא	יִמְשָׁלֵךְ	וְלֹא	יִסְפָּר	וְיִהְיֶה	וְלֹא
H834	H3808		H4058	H3808	H5608	H1961	
וְיִהְיֶה	בָּמָקָם		אֲשֶׁר	וְיִהְיֶה	לֹא	לֹא	
	H4725		H834	H1992	H1992	H3808	
וְיִהְיֶה	עַמִּי		אֲתָּה	וְיִהְיֶה	לֹא		
unto them	Ye are not my people		H859	there it shall be said	H559		
	H5971						
וְיִהְיֶה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ		אֲתָּה	וְיִהְיֶה	לֹא		
of the children	God	of the living	H2416	there it shall be said	H1992		
H1121	H410						

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 6:18 (Parallel theme): And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

John 1:12 (References God): But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Isaiah 43:6 (Parallel theme): I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Isaiah 66:20 (References Israel): And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem,

saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

Hosea 2:23 (References God): And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

Genesis 13:16 (Parallel theme): And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

Hosea 1:9 (References God): Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

Genesis 22:17 (Parallel theme): That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

Hebrews 11:12 (Parallel theme): Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Genesis 32:12 (Parallel theme): And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.