

Hosea 11:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Analysis

When Israel was a child, then I loved him—God recalls the exodus with tender, fatherly love (אֶחָד, ahav). The **child** (נָעָר, na'ar) metaphor shifts from unfaithful wife (chapters 1-3) to rebellious son (chapter 11), showing multiple dimensions of covenant relationship. **Called my son out of Egypt**—Matthew 2:15 quotes this as fulfilled in Christ's return from Egypt, using 'typological' interpretation: Israel's history prefigures Messiah's. Jesus is the true Israel who succeeds where the nation failed. Hosea's point: despite divine father-love, Israel rebelled (v.2, 'they sacrificed unto Baalim'). God's paternal anguish pervades verses 8-9: 'How shall I give thee up?'

Historical Context

This verse grounds God's relationship with Israel in the Exodus event (c. 1446 BC or 1290 BC depending on chronological reckoning), reminding Hosea's 8th century audience of their origins. 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt' emphasizes God's elective love and redemptive action as the foundation of covenant relationship—Israel did not choose God, but God chose and redeemed Israel. Matthew 2:15 applies this typologically to Christ's return from Egypt, showing Jesus as the true Israel who perfectly fulfills what the nation failed to accomplish. Hosea's appeal to the Exodus reminded a rebellious generation that their identity depended entirely on God's gracious initiative, not their merit.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Hosea 11:1 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

לֹבֶן: בָּרָא אֹתִי וּמִמִּצְרָיִם וְאֶחָבָה הָוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל נְעָרָה כִּי
H3588 was a child H3478 When Israel H157 then I loved H4714 out of Egypt H7121 him and called H1121 my son
H5288 H3478 H157 H4714 H7121 H1121

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 2:15 (References Egypt): And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Exodus 4:22 (References Israel): And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

Jeremiah 2:2 (Love): Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.

Hosea 2:15 (References Egypt): And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

Hosea 13:4 (References Egypt): Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.