

Hosea 11:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

Analysis

And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him. This verse captures Israel's tragic pattern of persistent rebellion despite repeated prophetic calls to return to God. The Hebrew word "bent" (telu'im, תִּלּוּיִם) means hung up, suspended, or inclined toward—indicating a fixed disposition or habitual tendency. "Backsliding" (meshubati, מְשׁוּבָתִי) describes turning away, apostasy, or covenant unfaithfulness.

The phrase "though they called them to the most High" refers to the prophets' repeated appeals for Israel to return to Yahweh, the supreme God (al, אֵל, meaning "upward" or "to the most High"). Yet tragically, "none at all would exalt him" (lo yerommenenhu, לֹא יִרְוּמְנֶנּוּהוּ)—the people refused to lift up, honor, or worship God despite clear invitations to do so.

This verse reveals the depth of human sinfulness: even when confronted with truth and offered redemption, the rebellious heart resists returning to God. The pattern described here transcends Israel's specific historical situation, illustrating humanity's universal condition apart from grace. Romans 3:10-12 echoes this reality: "there is none that seeketh after God." Yet Hosea's larger message provides hope—God's covenant love persists despite Israel's unfaithfulness, pointing forward to the new covenant established through Christ's atoning work.

Historical Context

Hosea prophesied in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during its final decades before Assyrian conquest (circa 755-725 BCE). This was a period of political instability, social corruption, and rampant idolatry, particularly Baal worship. Despite experiencing temporary prosperity under Jeroboam II, Israel's spiritual condition had deteriorated catastrophically.

The prophetic ministry during this era included contemporaries like Amos and Isaiah who likewise called the people to repentance. The phrase "they called them to the most High" references these prophetic appeals that went largely unheeded. Israel's syncretism blended Yahweh worship with Canaanite fertility cult practices, creating a corrupt religious system that maintained outward forms while abandoning covenant faithfulness.

The historical trajectory culminated in 722 BCE when Assyria destroyed Samaria and scattered the Northern Kingdom's population. Hosea's prophecy warned of this coming judgment while offering hope for ultimate restoration. His message, rooted in his own painful marriage to an unfaithful wife, illustrated God's anguished love for a persistently rebellious people. The verse thus serves both as historical indictment and timeless warning about the human heart's tendency toward spiritual adultery despite divine grace.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What patterns of "backsliding" or spiritual drift do you recognize in your own walk with God, and what specific disciplines help counter these tendencies?
2. How does understanding humanity's bent toward rebellion apart from grace affect your evangelism, discipleship, and pastoral ministry?

3. In what ways do modern believers resist or ignore prophetic calls to deeper faithfulness, similar to Israel's response here?
4. How does God's persistent love despite Israel's persistent rebellion demonstrate the nature of covenant grace that culminates in Christ?
5. What warning does this verse provide about maintaining outward religious forms while the heart remains bent away from God?

Interlinear Text

וְעַמִּי יִ	תִּלְוָא יִם	לְמַשׁוּבָת יִ	וְאֶל	עַל
And my people	are bent	to backsliding	H413	them to the most High
H5971	H8511	H4878		H5920
יִקְרָא הוּ	יִנֵּד	לֹא אֵ	יְרוּמִם:	
from me though they called	none at all	H3808	would exalt	
H7121	H3162		H7311	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 8:5 (Parallel theme): Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

Psalms 81:11 (Parallel theme): But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

Proverbs 14:14 (Parallel theme): The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

Jeremiah 3:11 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

Hosea 11:2 (Parallel theme): As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

Hosea 14:4 (Parallel theme): I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

Hosea 7:16 (Parallel theme): They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

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