

Love's Case Against Israel

By Pastor Cory Griess

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Calvary Protestant Reformed Church
1902 First Street
Hull, IA 51239

Website: www.calvaryprc.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/calvaryprc

Let's turn in God's Word this morning to the book of Hosea chapter 11. Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Hosea chapter 11. Our text this morning is the first nine verses of the chapter. I won't reread that, so give that special attention. Hosea 11.

This is God speaking.

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city. They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.¹

That far we read there.

¹ Hosea 11:1-9.

Let's also go to the New Testament a minute and read a few verses from Matthew chapter two. Matthew two verses 13, 14 and 15.

Here the gospel writer quotes in the first verse of Hosea 11, speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ. Mathew two verse 13.

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child [that is Jesus] and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet [and he prophet there is Hosea in chapter 11 verse one], saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.²

Beloved of God, there is a commentary by a Dutch preacher on the book of Hosea that is called *Love's Complaint*. That is a wonderful title for it captures the heart of the prophecy of Hosea. It is love's complaint.

The love in the title of that commentary is God's, God's love for his people. God set his love upon his chosen people Israel. The complaint in that title is love's complaint against Israel for they have rebelled against him in their sin. Hosea prophesies just before the captivity to Assyria. The Israelites have forsaken God, forsaken the covenant and God is going to bring them into Assyria as chastisement for their sins.

Throughout the book of Hosea the rebellion of the Israelites is seen as a personal rebellion. It is a covenantal rebellion. The complaint is the complaint of love. God has set his love upon his people and they have rebelled. Therefore love is complaining in the book.

That is the same theme that we have here, then, in Hosea chapter 11. Only now love's complaint has reached its climax. There is really no more soul stirring example in all of the Old Testament of the covenantal love of God for his people. God is presented here in Hosea 11, especially in verse eight, as heart wrenched in his love for his children and in his complaint against them for their rebellion.

To speak of it in human terms, God is here in chapter 11 in a very difficult position. He is presented here in the chapter as both prosecutor and judge. Only now he is both prosecutor and judge of his own son, Israel. And God, as you know, cannot but be a just judge. His son Israel deserves the death penalty.

I don't know if there has ever been an earthly judge that has been put in that position, having to judge their own child and then being faced with the fact that their child is guilty and deserves the death penalty for their crime. But here God is. And as we would expect, then, there is some emotional language in the text. How could there not be? And while it

² Matthew 2:13-15.

is true that God is speaking in human terms here, human language so that we can understand what is going on, the language is the language of covenantal love. And we ought not blunt its force so that it goes over our heads without leaving deep impressions, marks in our own souls as we understand this passage. This is the God who loves his people and is affected by their sin and rebellion as a father is by the rebellion of his own son. This is the God whose covenant love will not end.

Let's look this morning at this unique covenantal case as God brings charges against Israel his own son in the chapter. Let's do that under the theme, "Love's Case Against Israel." Two points: first, the charge, the charge in the case; and then, second, the verdict in the case. Love's case against Israel, the charge and the verdict.

Jehovah God, the prosecutor, judge and Father first brings the evidence in this case to establish the fact that Israel, his son, has rebelled against the God who all throughout Israel's history has been absolutely gracious and kind to his people. God brings that charge with two images in the passage. The first is that he let Israel out of Egypt like a father would lead his son. That is verse one of the chapter.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."³

He is talking, of course, about the exodus there when God took Israel out of Egypt in the exodus. The fact that God terms Israel his son here recalls to us the fact that at the time of the exodus God sent Moses to Pharaoh and told Moses to tell Pharaoh these words, Exodus four verse 23.

"And I say unto thee, [God says to Pharaoh] Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn."⁴

God said to Israel back then when they were in Egypt, "You are my firstborn son. And, Pharaoh, if you don't let my son go, then I will destroy your firstborn sons."

That is exactly what happened, of course. Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go and so God destroyed the firstborn in Egypt with the 10th plague.

Well now in our passage so many years later God is recalling this to Israel.

"I led you out as my son. You were my son and you still are. You are my covenantal people. And I called you out of Egypt by my sovereign, free grace."

Sovereign calling out of Egypt is explained a few verses later in verse four in very beautiful fatherly language where God says:

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."⁵

³ Hosea 11:1.

⁴ Exodus 4:23.

⁵ Hosea 11:4.

He is saying, “I put ropes around them, really, and I forcibly pulled them out of Egypt.” That is the idea. It is sovereign, irresistible grace that drew them out.

That word for “draw...”

“I drew them with cords of a man...”⁶

That word for “draw” is used, for example in Genesis 37 verse 28 where Joseph brothers are said to have drawn Joseph out of the pit. After they threw him in that pit, they drew him out. It is a powerful drawing.

The Arminians would say that that word “draw” means wooed, God wooed Israel out of Egypt. He sort of called nicely to them, but then left it up to them whether or not they wanted to come out. But that is not what the word means. It doesn’t mean woo. And I don’t think Joseph was wooed out of the pit. Joseph was drawn out of the pit with power and strength. So, too, God did not give the Israelites the option of coming out of Egypt. He stepped in to the situation with his sovereign power and he drew Israel forcibly out of there.

The bands of love with cords of a man. That means with humane cords, cords of kindness, cords of tenderness is the idea. The point is that it was love that drew God to do this. God forcibly pulled them out with sovereign power, but the power was a tender power. It was a loving power. It was a fatherly power.

As a Father God taught and trained his son, verse three.

“I taught Ephraim also to go [or to walk], taking them by their arms.”⁷

It is the picture there of a father who is teaching his little son to walk. He holds on to his arms so that if he stumbles and falls he can catch him, a beautiful picture.

God says, “I drew you out of Egypt, Ephraim.” And Ephraim stands for Israel, all of Israel. “I drew you out of Egypt with sovereign power, with cords of love. But when I drew you out, you were a child. You were an infant. I led you. I had to teach you how to walk on you own two feet. When you stumbled I held on to your arms and held you up. I was a father there in the wilderness, Israel. I cared for you every step of the way. Don’t you remember when you were attacked at Rephidim? I let you fight, yes, because you had to learn. You had to learn how to walk, but I had Moses hold up his arms. And when his arms were held up that meant victory for you. That was to show you that I was carrying for you. I was looking over you. I was watching you. As a father his child, I cared for you. I was always faithful to you, Israel, as a father to his son.”

That is the first image of the text, a father caring of his son.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Hosea 11:3.

The second image here is of God caring for Israel as a good farmer would care for his ox. It is the second part of verse four.

“...and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.”⁸

A yoke of an oxen and the oxen was bending its head down and that yoke would come down and lay on the ox’s jaws so that the oxen could not open his mouth to eat.

God says to Israel, “I was like the good farmer who cares of his animals and who pulls that yoke back so that it is off your jaws so that the animal can eat. But not only that,” says God:

“I laid meat unto them.”⁹

Literally in the Hebrew, “I inclined to them and I caused them to eat.”

He was like the farmer. This is the picture. He was like the farmer who not only pulls the yoke back from off the jaws, but gets down and scoops up some grain in his hand and holds it to the mouth of the ox so that the ox can eat.

Well, what is God talking about there? He is talking about his love and care for his people in feeding them with manna and the quail in the wilderness. They were in a place where they could not eat. They had no food. But God cared for them tenderly showing his love in that he did not just lead them to a place where they could, perhaps, find food. But he made the food come to them.

God says to his people, “Don’t you see, Israel, how I was to you? I was like that good, compassionate farmer who holds the food up to the mouth of the ox. I caused the manna to come right to your doorstep in your tent. It was like I was holding it up to you with my hand and he quail came in the evening. I was so tender. I was so gracious to you. I cared for you.”

God has been gracious. He has been kind to us in the same way he describes to Israel here in the text. He has sovereignly called us as his sons and daughters out of the Egypt of our sin. He drew us out of our depravity with cords of a man, with bands of love. Sovereign, irresistible grace took hold of us, beloved, and brought us to him. God stepped in and he rescued us. There was no wooing there, no wooing with the ultimate decision left up to us. And thank God, because we would have never come. But powerfully, by his Word and Spirit he called us, drew us to Christ. This is the doctrine of the effectual call here being taught in the text. His voice rang out and that voice was like ropes to pull us out of our sin and depravity to himself and to his Christ. There were ropes of over, humane ropes, ropes of kindness and of grace. He did not drag us kicking and screaming

⁸ Hosea 11:4.

⁹ Ibid.

against our will, but God's effectual call drew us out with tenderness and love. He changed, by his sovereign will, our will so that we wanted to come out, so that we saw his grace and his mercy. Sovereignly with power he called us, but tenderly as a father. As a father just like with the Israelites he taught us, he trained us. He taught us to walk as sons and daughters.

Spiritually, he has taught us to walk on our own two feet. He has grown us up in the faith slowly but surely. We look back in our lives and we see how he has grown us. Faith grew stronger. Faith continues to grow in each one of us in our own level and at our own pace. He gives us trails in our lives just like he sent the Israelites to Rephidim to fight that we might mature, that we might grow. But he does it always holding on to us, always caring for us. When we fall, when we stumble, the promises of his Word are there to catch us, to hold us up and hold us by the arm so that we can keep going slowly but surely. God the sovereign Father called us and God the sovereign Father grows us as his sons and daughters. He has fed us like he fed the Israelites. He has taken that yoke, that yoke upon our jaws, the yoke of blindness, blindness to his Word and he has pulled it back so that we can feed at his Word, so that we can eat it up from our souls and grow. He has given us his Spirit so that it is as he stoops down and feeds us. His Spirit spoon feeds us in our spiritual mouth so that we can take that Word in and grow feeding upon it. He has fed us in the sacraments.

This is your God this morning, beloved, in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, stooping down to feed us spiritually. As the elders go out and bring the bread and the wine to you in your seats, that is a picture of God who graciously stoops down to feed you the body and blood of his own dear son. He has been faithful. He has been gracious, sovereignly gracious all throughout our lives.

And now in the face of this fatherly kindness, in the face of this sovereign grace, the Israelites have rebelled. This is the charge that God brings in the text. This is the case that he must bring against Israel his Son for he is holy. God has only been gracious. He has only been faithful. He has only been tender. And yet they have rebelled.

Their rebellion is described here in personal terms. First of all, verse three.

"I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them."¹⁰

God is saying in spite of his fatherly kindness, they did not know what they should have known beyond the shadow of a doubt, which should have been plain to anyone, that I had been the one who had cared for them, that I had graciously condescended to them, that I had loved them. Think about it in the history.

Many times in the exodus they rebelled, didn't they? You think of the golden calves. You think of all the complaining about the manna, about the water. They complained

¹⁰ Hosea 11:3.

about the fact that God had even taken them out of Egypt. They didn't trust that God would bring them into Canaan.

And God speaks here, then, as a parent whose love has been taken for granted. They have taken for granted his grace and his mercy and his care for them. His love has been spurned. He has only been gracious and kind, but his child in his selfishness will not see it. Because they knew not that God had healed them. They turned away from him to other gods. Verse two.

“As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.”¹¹

The “they...”

“As they called them...”¹²

That is the prophets. As the prophets called them. So now we are moving forward in Israel's history. God is recounting all of his gracious kindnesses to Israel. Now it is the time of the kings and the prophets. The prophets called out to Israel, “Serve God, repent. Turn to the Lord.”

But God says, “The more the prophets called to you, the more you turned away. The more you went and sacrificed to Baal and burned incense to graven images.”

They do not heed the law of the Father that was gracious and tender to them.

The first and primary point of the Father's law was: Serve me and serve me alone. This they have not done.

Why would they go anywhere else? He has been so gracious and so kind, so tender to them. He has redeemed them. And yet they rebel. Yet they turn away. They are the prodigal Son who leaves the Father and squanders everything that the Father has given him. He uses it in the service of pleasure and of sin.

This is the case: Love's complaint, offended love. This is what God brings to his children. And could the case be any more damning, beloved? What sort of a son would act like this to an all gracious and tender Father?

Maybe a son like you. Maybe a son like me.

What have you discovered in a week of self examination? Or did you forget to even think about it in the first place?

Here is our sin, beloved, that the God who set his sovereign grace upon us, who drew us

¹¹ Hosea 11:2.

¹² Ibid.

with bands of love, who has been faithful to care for us physically and spiritually is the God that we forsake without hardly even giving a thought about it. We sin as though we are a people that do not know that he has healed us. As the Israelites, we take his grace for granted. We do what we want, not what he commands. We look at his law as some nice suggestions, perhaps. Rather than the law of a Father who has been so gracious, so kind, so condescending in his love, he feeds us from his own hand and we act as though we deserve it to be so. And we desert him for the pagan gods of idols, of pleasures of self as though it is our right, as though we deserve for him to draw us out.

Anyone here who has felt the offended love of a parent when the child takes your sacrifice for granted, when the child will not heed, for to the child his will is more important than your will. Anyone who has experienced this knows the case that God brings here in the chapter. And anyone who is seated here this morning that knows himself knows that the case that God brings against Israel his son is the case that he brings against you and me this morning as we gather before him in his house.

God has stooped down to feed us three months ago in the Lord's supper. And in the meantime what have we done? We have been guilty of rebellion against his grace. We have offended his love, his graciousness and tenderness. Is not the charge that God brings against Israel in verse seven of the chapter, the charge that he rightfully brings against us gathered here this morning?

“And my people are bent to backsliding from me.”¹³

“My own sons and daughters forsake me time and time again in the face of my graciousness, tenderness and love.”

Well, what of the verdict then, Jehovah God?

Faithful covenant God whose gracious love is offended, the evidence is overwhelming. It is beyond a reasonable doubt. The case could not be any more damning than it is. What do you pronounce, oh Judge, King of all the earth? What of Israel your son and what of us your sons seated here this morning?

Well, first of all, the verdict, God says, is that there will be chastisement for his people. The verdict in the case in Hosea chapter 11 begins in verses five and six.

He [that is, Israel] shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. [They refused to repent] And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels [because of their devisings against God].¹⁴

¹³ Hosea 11:7.

¹⁴ Hosea 11:5-6.

Because they refused the call of the prophets to return to Jehovah God, they shall go in bondage to Assyria. That is what God is saying. Assyria will come and take them into captivity. They will be chastised heavily. The sword of the Assyrians will fall upon the cities of the 10 tribes. They will come in and they will wreak havoc. And this, of course, is exactly what happened. The Assyrians came. They took the northern tribes into captivity. They ripped them out of their homes. The enemy broke down their gates. That is what the branches refers to in verse six, the bars of their gates. They were devoured by Assyria, because of the Israelites counsels, their devisings against the Lord.

His chastisement, chastisement for the backslidden people of Jehovah God. It is a terrible chastisement. It will be pain. It will be terror. Their offences before Jehovah God will not go unmet. But it will lead the elect among them back to repentance.

Beloved, God is not a pushover. He is the perfect Father. His covenantal love, his tenderness does not make him one of those fathers that never confronts the sins of his children and never chastises, that never speaks language of harshness and never corrects that is a pushover. For us if we come to his house this morning with our rebellions in our hand, here is the first part of his verdict.

“You will be chastised. I see your sin even if you do not, even if no one else does and I will deal with it. You will know that I am chastising you for it and you will know that I am Jehovah God.”

That is the first part of the verdict, chastisement for Israel, the beloved. And now here we get to the heart of the sermon this morning. Beloved, the verdict should legally be a lot more than chastisement. According to God’s own words the verdict should be the utter destruction of this people. God had told his people early on in their history that the covenant relationship between him and them demanded holiness. And God had told his people what the judgment would be for not being holy in this covenant relationship for forsaking the covenant. God said that, for example, in Deuteronomy 29 verses 20 through 25. Let’s take the time to look at this because this is so important for understanding the rest of the chapter.

Deuteronomy 29: 20-25.

This is God speaking to Israel of his covenant and of the punishment that will come upon them for forsaking the covenant. This is early in Israel’s history years ago, years before our text in Hosea.

Deuteronomy 29 verse 20.

The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written

in this book of the law: So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, [now pay attention to this] like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim [Those two cities are mentioned in Hosea. We will get to that], which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.¹⁵

There in verse 23 God says that the punishment shall be upon his people Israel that they will be destroyed with fire and brimstone just like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboim. Those two cities, Admah and Zeboim were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah when God reigned fire down upon them at the time of Lot for their wickedness.

So God has said here in Deuteronomy, “The curse of punishment for offending my covenant is the same for Admah and Zeboim as it is going to be for Israel. Not even rubble is going to be left. Not even tufts of grass are going to be growing. All of it burned with fire and brimstone as judgment for sin. For I am the holy God and all will know that you have forsaken the covenant of the Lord your God.”

That is exactly what the Israelites did. They forsook the covenant of the Lord their God. That is the whole point of the book of Hosea. You have forsaken God’s covenant. And now, you see, that curse that fell upon Admah and Zeboim, the fire and brimstone, must fall upon Israel for their forsaking of the covenant of God.

But here is the problem. They are not Admah and Zeboim. They are not some pagan nation. They are God’s son. And now you can understand verse eight of Hosea 11 when he brings up Admah and Zeboim in this deep cry of the Father.

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.”¹⁶

God had laid out his punishment for offending the covenant way back in Deuteronomy 29. And he must lay out that punishment for he is the just and the holy God. But now in Hosea God is presented as the divine Father who is wrestling with this in himself.

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 29:20-25.

¹⁶ Hosea 11:8.

“How can I destroy my people like I destroyed Admah and Zeboim? That is the curse that is due to them, I know. But they are my son.”

This is anthropomorphic language, but it is absolutely heart wrenching language as God internalizes the issue and he asks himself questions in verse eight.

“How shall I give thee up to this? How can I do this to Israel my own son? My heart is turned. Literally it is churning within me. My compassions are inflamed. For this is Israel my son.”

And then he answers his own questions in verse nine.

“I won’t. I won’t do it.”

“I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim.”¹⁷

“I won’t do it. My covenantal love for them will not allow it. I am God in the midst of them, verse nine. I dwell with them. I am their Father. They are my sons. I cannot destroy them. I will chastise them, yes, in bondage in Assyria, but I will not bring fire and brimstone upon them as I did to Admah and Zeboim. They are my people.”

That brings up a question then, doesn’t it? How can he not? How can he not? He has already said that the curse of disobedience, way back years ago in Deuteronomy 29 is that they would be destroyed. How then can he justly not destroy them like Admah and Zeboim?

Enter the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel according to Matthew makes it clear that this curse, the curse of Deuteronomy 29 that must fall upon God’s people God places instead upon Jesus Christ his own Son.

Matthew chapter two Matthew quotes the first verse of Hosea 11 saying that Jesus Christ is the new Israel, the true Israel. And he is proving that by saying that Jesus Christ has fulfilled the exodus account that begins with the fact that just as Israel came out of Egypt, so Jesus Christ came out of Egypt.

You remember that Herod tried to kill Jesus by having the babies two and under killed. And God told Joseph, “Go to Egypt until Herod dies and then you can come back.” Jesus came out of Egypt.” And the Holy Spirit says through Matthew that Jesus Christ had to go to Egypt and come back, verse 15.

“...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Hosea 11:9.

¹⁸ Matthew 2:15.

And if you keep reading in the book of Matthew, Matthew goes on to explain that just as the Israelites were tempted in the wilderness for 40 years, they wandered there for 40 years, so the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted for 40 days in the wilderness by the devil so that the point that Matthew by the Holy Spirit is making is that Jesus Christ is now going through the exodus himself and he is being the true Israel. He is being the Israel that Israel never was. He is Israel. He is the fulfillment of Israel. So that Matthew is saying that in every respect where Israel failed as God's son, Jesus, the true Israel, the true Son did not fail. He is the true Son of God, sent to be the perfect Son that never rebelled.

“Out of Egypt I have called Israel and they rebelled, they forsook me. But out of Egypt I called Jesus my true Son and he never rebelled. He never forsook me.”

And now if Israel my adopted son is going to remain my adopted son then the fire and brimstone of Deuteronomy 29 that must justly fall upon Israel my son will fall upon Jesus my true son.

On the cross, beloved, Jesus Christ the true Israel, the true Son was destroyed like Admah and Zeboim. To put in the language of that curse, there was no rubble left. There were no tufts of grass growing. The full wrath of God for Israel's and for ours forsaking of the covenant fell upon Jesus Christ's true son, sustained that wrath, that curse for you and for me so that God could justly and rightly say, Hosea 11 verse nine.

“I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim.”¹⁹

In order to have Israel as his adopted son, God sent his own true Son to bear the curse of Deuteronomy 29.

As we stand before the Lord, the prosecutor and the judge, after a week of self examination, we know the verdict. We are guilty. God says to us this morning, “I have called you out of the Egypt of your sin, yet look what you do. You return as a dog to its vomit. You offend my covenant. You are not worthy to be my son and the curse of my justice should fall upon your head.”

But in the supper we hear the exact opposite.

“I love you. I loved you from eternity. I drew you in time.”

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim.”²⁰

For the curse will fall instead upon the Son made flesh. Here is his body broken for you. Here is his blood spilled out for you. He will take the curse. He was made as Admah and

¹⁹ Hosea 11:9.

²⁰ Hosea 11:8-9.

Zeboim for you. He can bear what you cannot bear and he is willing. For the triune God has loved you.

Understand the bread and the wine that you eat this morning, beloved, it is the Savior who takes the curse for you and for me. It is life. It is hope. And it is given because God loved you from before the foundation of the world as his sons and daughters, because from all eternity his true Son was slain, because his covenantal love will do whatever it takes to maintain you as his sons. Amen.

Let us pray.

Father, we are thankful for the Lord Christ and we see thy fatherly graciousness, tenderness and kindness as thou dost stoop down to feed us with his body and blood this morning in his name. Amen.