

7/2/17 Handout – God’s Pattern of Parental Love in the OT Prophets

Long before the NT spoke of God the Father choosing us and in love predestining us to adoption (Ephesians 1:4-5), OT Israel was adopted (Romans 9:4) as vividly portrayed by her prophets:

1. God spoke through His prophets often of His adopting love toward Israel as His child

It began in a birth-mother’s womb, Jer. 1:5: *‘Before you were born I set you apart...’* (NIV unless noted). Hosea 11: *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son... It was I who taught [them] to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them...*

God chose to call children from other nations as His own, re-naming children who didn’t know Him yet: *‘I name you, though you do not know me...you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, “...I have chosen you and not cast you off”... my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name...’* (Isaiah 45:4, 41:9, 43:7 ESV)

Amos 5:2 said Israel lay *‘abandoned on the ground, with no one to help her up’* (NLT, NAS *‘neglected’*). Israel was as an unwanted child God took as His own daughter, Ezekiel 16: *‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem...On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood... for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine... I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. I clothed you...*

2. God’s love in these contexts was to depraved, defiant, disinterested, disobedient children

Ezekiel 16 goes on to describe Israel’s ingratitude, indiscriminate affection to strangers and not attaching to God, inappropriate acting out sexually, idolatry, etc. God says in v. 47 Israel was worse than Sodom: *in all your ways you soon became more depraved than they...Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done...did not commit half the sins you did...⁶⁰ Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you...*

Hosea 11: *my son...the more I called to him, the farther he moved from me...he doesn’t know or even care that it was I who took care of him...My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows* (NLT)

Jeremiah 32: *Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth... nothing but provoke me...They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline... I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them...I will rejoice in doing them good... I will restore... (32:30, 33, 40-41, 44)*

Jeremiah 31: *I have loved you with an everlasting love. That is why I have continued to be faithful to you ...my dear children Israel... I will do this because I am Israel’s father... I will give them comfort and joy in place of their sorrow... the people of Israel are my dear children. They are the children I take delight in. For even though I must often rebuke them, I still remember them with fondness. So I am deeply moved with pity for them and will surely have compassion on them... (Jer 31:3-4, 9, 13, 20, NET, see also v. 37)*

Isaiah 1:2-6, 54:8: *the LORD says: “The children I raised and cared for have rebelled against me... My people don’t recognize my care for them...Your head is injured, and your heart is sick...” In a burst of anger I turned my face away for a little while. But with everlasting love I will have compassion... (NLT)*

More on God's pattern of parental love to His people in the Prophets

1. God's loving words to His children who were oppressed, hurt, or scattered from birth-lands

Zephaniah 3 promises God the Father *'will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing... I will deal with all who oppressed you; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor...I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the people'* (v. 17-20 NIV). Another translation has *'With his love, he will calm all your fears... I will gather you who mourn... you will be disgraced no more... I will save the weak and helpless ones. I will...gather you together and... give you a good name...'*

Zechariah 2:8: *this is what the LORD Almighty says... whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye* (literally 'center or pupil of his eye'; NLT *'Anyone who harms you harms my most precious possession'*)

Malachi 3:17 *"They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son..."*

Isa 43:1, 4: *Fear not...you are mine... you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you...* (ESV)

Do we show God's heart to our kids? Do we speak with honor and praise to them? About them to others?

Resources for further study:

How Brains of Adopted and Foster Kids Can Be Different and How To Help – [click here](#)

Hope for Hard Places, brief Christian Alliance for Orphans video – <https://vimeo.com/116877854>

Stuck, Tapestry Adoption Ministry Seminar, Irving Bible Church – <https://vimeo.com/61691636>