

## **The Lord's Compassion Aroused**

Hosea 4:1 – 11:11

by Don Falkos

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The Lord spoke through the prophet Hosea to the people of Ephraim (another name for the northern kingdom):

You are unfaithful, unkind, dishonest, and untrustworthy. You kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere. Your priests and leaders are corrupt and ineffective.

You have deserted me to worship other gods. You offer sacrifices to idols; you think a piece of wood can give you what you need. Your women have turned to prostitution and adultery. And so have your men. How foolish you have become. You have earned destruction.

You have left me as a prostitute leaves her husband. You cannot see your way back to me because you do not know me. You may turn to anyone you wish, but none will be able to help you until you turn to me and earnestly search for me.

You are injured. Let me bandage your wounds. Allow me to restore our relationship. I want your love, not sacrifices; I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings.

You have rebelled against me. You have forgotten me. Yet I long to redeem you. The day of reckoning is at hand. I remember all your evil deeds. I ought to punish you; I ought to reject you because of your disobedience. But if you will seek after me with all your heart, I will show you unfailing love. Despite your ingratitude, I would take no pleasure in punishing you. My compassion is aroused. I prefer to call you home and watch as you return to me.