**December 22nd 2024 Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**Text: Hosea 11:1** 0756

**Theme: Called Out of Egypt.**

May the knowledge of salvation through Jesus our Savior, born in Bethlehem many years ago, bring you hope and peace until everlasting life. Amen. Dear Christians: As we have studied portions of the book of Hosea, and when one seriously studies Scripture, he will find that the wisdom of God is truly beyond our comprehension. The more we discover concerning Him and His Word, the more we realize that we do not know, and can never exhaust, the wealth of knowledge found therein. A single passage of Scripture could be studied for years, never fully making all the connections, never fully comprehending all that God in His wisdom put therein. If only we would spend a small amount of our time diving into His Word we would find that we are educated by the omniscient God Himself. How much time do you waste each day with trivial things? Do you spend time watching TV? Do you waste time on your phone? The average American spends about 4.5 hours on their phone each day. Many spend far more than that. But how much time do you spend reading God’s Word? Do you spend one hour? Do you spend ten minutes even, or in all honesty do you read it at all most days? The point here is not to cause guilt, but to point out that we make time for meaningless trivial things, even large amounts of time, whi9le something as important as our own eternal salvation is pushed to the back burner and given little or no thought except maybe on Sunday morning. Even on Sunday mornings sometimes we don’t feel like getting out of bed, or we make excuses of some kind so that we might not have to attend worship. Now to be sure there are legitimate excuses, but these are few and far between. The truth of the matter is that our flesh hates hearing God’s Word, and so our flesh tells us that it is not necessary, or it is boring even. Yet we will make time for whatever is our priority, be it Scripture, facebook, youtube videos, or whatever. Now to be sure, without some hint of what can be found in Scripture, what is the motivation to actually go and look therein. What motivates a person to open the book and spend time reading it? Why should I? Here is the crux of the matter: there are two lines of thinking when it comes to the reason for neglect of God’s Word. Either the person thinks that God’s Word has nothing to offer him, or he knows all he can in regard to Scripture, and so has no need of opening it again. Both are false.

In truth, there is no limit to how much a person can learn from God. And the more a person learns, the more God reveals to him. To this end there was a time when I would not simply print out the proof passages within the text of the sermon, but would simply write the reference to where it might be found. I am going to resume that practice. As should always be the case, when studying Scripture we should have Scripture in front of us, we should find the passages and read them, give thought to them, and meditate on them. So then, here I would like us all to turn to the book of Romans, chapter 11, and read verses 33-36: **read verses here.** The apostle Paul declares, in no uncertain terms that the depth and riches of the knowledge of God are unsearchable! His exclamation is a result of his foregoing commentary on the grace of God. Now if Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, taught by Go0d Himself concerning the Gospel, declares that he cannot attain unto the wisdom of God, how much less can we? Today we continue our study of the book of Hosea, and we will find a small revelation of the depth of God’s wisdom. As has been said in the past, many prophecies contain more than one fulfillment, and today’s text is no different, with many different fulfillments, and which is directly in line with the season of Christmas. Let us then take a look at our short text, though full of God’s wisdom. Our text is found in the eleventh chapter of the book of the prophet Hosea, verse eleven.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O Lord God almighty, when we see the greatness of Thy power and the wisdom of Thy Word, we are humbled by these things, and implore Thee to condescend to us. Do not turn away from us in our lowly estate, but come unto us and save us. Grant that we see in the preaching of Hosea the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, that desolate and spiritually dead place, to a ;land that flows with mil and honey, even the promised land. Show unto us also that Thou didst call Thy Son out of Egypt when He was yet an infant child, to come to bring salvation unto the world of sinners, the redemption of our souls. Teach us finally that in due time, when the time is right, that Thou wilt call us out of spiritual Egypt and bring us to our eternal home where Thou dost dwell in righteousness and purity. Grant that our faith take hold of these things, that when we study them they edify us and bring comfort and hope to our souls. O Lord, call us home to Thee soon, that we may dwell there forever and ever.. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God, let us learn that God called out of Egypt:

1. **In Moses’ time.** We read our text: **read verse here.** Throughout the history of the Bible, there is no land or region or people, other than Israel itself, that is mentioned more than the land of Egypt. It plays prominently throughout history, and our attention is meant to be drawn to that fact. Here we focus on a former event in history, that of Israel’s enslavement in Egypt. Now Jacob had wandered in the land of future Canaan, with his four wives and twelve sons, as we have recently seen in Bible Class. If you have not attended Bible class recently I urge you to do so. In any case Jacob’s sons had hated Joseph, the eldest son of Rachel, Jacob’s favored wife. They hated him for two reasons, the first was that he was favored by his father over the other sons, but primarily because of the revelation God had given Joseph in the form of dreams. These dreams depicted the servitude of Joseph’s eleven brethren to himself. Thus the brothers through a series of events sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt, where Joseph flourished for a time. But when his master’s wife accused Joseph of rape, though he was innocent, Joseph found himself in prison. Later though he would interpret a dream of Pharaoh and be promoted to third ruler in all the land of Egypt, and would prepare Egypt for a famine which was to come. Here his brothers came to buy food during the famine and Joseph’s dreams were then fulfilled. Joseph’s entire family would then come to live in Egypt, and after Joseph had died, we hear disturbing reports. Let us turn to the book of Exodus, chapter 1, reading verses 8-14: **read verses here.** This new Pharaoh, likely, did not know Joseph, nor knew of him because a new line of kings and rulers overtook Egypt at this time, known as the Hyksos. Nevertheless the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites. Afrter about four hundred and twenty years of bondage in Egypt, God remembered His people, and sent Moses to deliver them. By many signs and wonders did God lead them out of Egypt, He redeemed them from their captors, set them free, and became their God, and they His people.

Now that entire story is meant, not just for the purpose of learning history, but for us to see therein the work of God in behalf of the redemption of mankind’s souls, as we have recently seen. God took his people out of the bondage they were held in by sin, death, and the devil. He brought them to a land of promise, even to heaven itself. These events in the life of Joseph and Moses was, and still is, symbolic of those things God does for us spiritually. We are bought from bondage and brought to a promised land, and though not a location on earth, it is promised land, that of heaven itself. So the words of Hosea, having a triple fulfillment, are first fulfilled by the redemption of God’s children out of the physical land of Egypt, to which Hosea is pointing. And yet this physical fulfillment is actually the least of them all, for that was a redemption of their bodies. The true redemption, and true fulfillment, is that of their souls. And this was done when God called out of Egypt:

1. **At Jesus’ time.** We read our text: **read verse here.** The connections between the time when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt by Moses, and the time of Jesus’ life on earth are astounding, and almost too many to mention. That being the case we will highlight some of them here. To do so, let us turn to the book of Matthew, chapter 2, reading verses 1-18: **read verses here.** Several things are here to be noted. First the coming of Jesus, the very thing we celebrate this time of year, is that which brings the true redemption of our souls. When the people of Israel were about to leave Egypt, God had told them that a tenth and final plague was set to be unleashed upon Egypt, the death of all the firstborn children. Any who believed God’s Word, were to paint the blood of an lamb, a spotless lamb, upon the doorposts of their houses, and when the angel, who came to slay those children saw the blood, He would pass over that house and lay no harm to the children. In like manner when Jesus came, He came as the spotless lamb, sacrificed for the sins of the world, and His blood is then painted on the doorposts of our hearts, and when the judgment comes, we will be passed over and suffer no harm. We will be safe. Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, said John the Baptist. It is His blood which redeems our souls. But what is still further astounding is that when Jesus was born, He and His family, Mary and Joseph, were sent to Egypt, to find refuge from harm, just as did Israel and his sons so long ago. Now notice the reaction of Herod: he slayed every child in Bethlehem who was two years old and younger, which was an attempt on Jesus’ life, but who was safe in Egypt. But notice the fulfillment of prophecy mentioned by Matthew in verse 18, Rachel wept for her children, the same Rachel who bore Jospeh of old and Bejamin his brother to Jacob, and whose family would find refuge in Egypt some three thousand years ago! Rachel weeps for the children of slaughter. Still in the same chapter of Matthew, let now read verses 19-21: **read verses here.** God then called the Child out of Egypt when the time was right. And verse fifteen makes reference to this prophecy of Hosea, as its true and ultimate fulfillment. Now the significance of this event is not to be overlooked. He went to Egypt to be safe, but when the time came, He returned to redeem His people, to redeem their souls. This redemption was also with power and great glory, though veiled and hidden, and its cost was not with plagues, nor with silver or gold, but the blood of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Is this not amazing? It is truly a wonder to see this prophecy in Hosea, and to know the fulfillments of it. The redemption purchased by Christ gives righteousness by faith, that is, it covers us with the righteousness of Christ. Now this leads us directly to the third fulfillment, God calls out of Egypt:
2. **At the last day.** We read our text: **read verse here.** Through the redemption made by Christ during His incarnation into the world, received through the gift of faith by the Word, we are now giving the forgiveness of all our sins and eternal life. Yet this will not be manifested here in this life, but in the life to come. And since the ultimate fulfillment of Hosea’s prophecy is spiritual, then this final fulfillment is also spiritual, for it results from the calling of Christ out of Egypt. Now let us turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 11, and read verse 8: **read verse here.** The spiritual wasteland of this world is Egypt itself, though Revelation is speaking of the Antichrist, the papacy of Rome, who is the spiritual ruler of this world. But just like the people of Israel of old, and like Jesus and His family, Egypt is a refuge for us, though all the while attempting to put us in bondage. We can have refuge in this world, because as Jesus said just before His ascension into heaven, He would be with us always even unto the end of the world. He keeps us and preserves us even in the midst of a hostile environment, like Egypt, until He calls us out from thence to be brought to our promised land, heaven. Now that call may come individually to us as the case might be, or it may come for all those remaining on earth at the last day. Either way it is coming and sooner than you might think.

Now when the Israelites were called out of Egypt, they were urged to repentance and faith, particularly surrounding the time of the last plague. In Jesus’ time, John the Baptist was sent and preached repentance for the remission of sins, which is nothing but a call to faith. Likewise today we are called to contrition and faith for we are to be called out of Egypt soon. Each Advent, we are to remember the first Advent and to look forward to the second Advent, His coming in glory to judge those alive and dead. We are warned to be ready, to be prepared for that day in contrition and faith. Now we know that we are to act as Christians. Thus I ask all of you, with myself included, if you knew that you were going to face your Judge tomorrow, is there anything that you would change in your life? Is there a sin that has power over you? Is there something going on in your life that you would not want Christ to see if He came tomorrow? If the answer to these questions is yes, then I implore you to put it away from yourself, by the power of God’s Word and Spirit, because it may well be that you are called out of Egypt soon. Recently I worked at a house, for an elderly couple who’s daughter died at the age of seventeen from cancer. My wife’s brother died in a car accident at the age of thirty three. Death can overtake us at any minute, and for this reason we are told to be ready. Further. Judgment is often said to be imminent at Jesus’ time, how close must it be now? Jesus said, turning to the book of 2 Peter, chapter 3, reading verses 9-12: **read verses here.** Let us then be children of our Father in heaven and remember the call out of Egypt both for the Israelites of Old, and the Israelites of the New Testament, that is, the Church of God. May God continue to bless us with His knowledge and wisdom, let hear Him and may He preserve us until we too, shall be called out of Egypt to go to our Promised Land. Amen.