

Our "Babylonian" Captivity

As I work my way through the Book of Hoshea, I still hear the same message that I heard thirty seven years ago when I first began to study the Scriptures. It's not what I want to hear. Moreover, today is a Sabbath, so why should I feel grief? Yet nearly four decades have passed and nothing has changed.

"My people have perished for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I have rejected you from being priest for Me. Since you have forgotten the Torah of your Elohim, I also forget your children." (4:6)

Thirty-seven years ago I did not understand how Elohim could reject us. I did not understand how Elohim could reject us for forgetting His Torah. At that time, neither did I understand that we are the lost sheep of the house of Israel who, long ago, were given YHWH's commandments through Moshe. I thought like you do now that His Laws were only temporary. I could not even hear how our Messiah said that the Torah would remain as long as there was a heaven and an earth. Over the years, however, I have slowly understood who we are and what we have done. For in the Torah is the knowledge of Elohim, and we have perished because of our rejection of that knowledge.

"And they shall eat but not be satisfied, they shall whore but not increase, for they have stopped obeying YHWH." (4:10)

As a people we can go on keeping the world's sacred holidays for as long as we want, but we will never bring satisfaction. Elohim has given us His Sabbaths in order for us to know Him and to be truly satisfied. The gratification that comes from prostitution is never satisfying. But, that very spirit of adultery has led us astray (vs 12). And so we eat and eat in our disobedience to YHWH and remain unsatisfied.

"Their deeds do not allow them to turn back to their Elohim, for the spirit of whoring is among them, and they do not know YHWH." (5:4).

My people, we have been carried into captivity. This is the language of Scriptures and especially of the prophets. When the tribes of Israel were led away and eventually scattered among the nations, they were carried into captivity. Now we do all that we can to blend into the world's religious system and not be noticed. We keep telling ourselves that the Torah is not for us or that if we keep YHWH's commandments it's just "legalism." But, alas we cannot do otherwise because of our captivity, and our very deeds reinforce that we are really prisoners.

"Come, let us turn back to YHWH. For He has torn but He does heal us, He has stricken but He binds us up. After two days He shall revive us, on the third day He shall raise us up, so that we live before Him. So let us know, let us pursue to know YHWH. His going forth is as certain as the morning. And He comes to us like rain, like the latter rain watering the earth." (6:1-3)

It is in our time that Israel is being called out of the nations and to return to our Elohim and to His Torah. We are in the third day, two thousand years after Yeshua's death; and just as He was raised from the dead so will all of Israel be raised. It is Yeshua Himself who is coming like the rain, in season and on time. We are at the beginning of that day and a miracle so great that it will astonish the nations.....the resurrection of Israel from the dead. All this time we have been telling ourselves that YHWH has rejected Israel, but He never has. For we are Israel and Elohim is about to release us from our captivity.

"Ephrayim mixes himself among the peoples, Ephrayim has become a cake unturned. Strangers have devoured his strength, but he does not know it. Grey hairs are also sprinkled on him, and he does not know it." (7:8-9)

May Elohim be praised because He is going to bring an end of our captivity and turn our hearts back to Him.

Shalom