

A NATION “DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE”

From *Royalty and Ruin* (Contemporary version of Ellen G White's *Prophets and Kings*) pp. 110, 111



For use in *Animated/Engaged Learning*.

God's favor toward the Israelites had always been conditional on their obedience. At Sinai they had entered into covenant with Him as “a special treasure to Me above all people.” “All that the Lord has spoken we will do,” they had promised. Exodus 19:5, 8. God had chosen Israel as His people, and they had chosen Him as their King.

Near the close of the wilderness wandering, on the very borders of the Promised Land, those who remained faithful renewed their vows of allegiance. Moses called on them to remain separate from the surrounding nations and to worship God alone. See Deuteronomy 4.

Moses had specially charged the Israelites not to lose sight of the commandments of God. He warned them clearly and strongly against the neighboring nations' customs of idol worship. “Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you.” Deuteronomy 4:23.

Calling heaven and earth to witness, Moses declared that if, after having lived long in the Land of Promise, the people bowed down to carved images and refused to return to the worship of the true God, they would be carried away captive and scattered among the heathen. “You will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess,” he warned them. “You will not prolong your days in it, but will be

utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you.” Verses 26, 27.

This prophecy, partly fulfilled in the time of the judges, met a more complete and literal fulfillment in the captivity of Israel in Assyria and of Judah in Babylon. Satan had tried repeatedly to cause the chosen nation to forget “the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments” that they had promised to keep forever. Deuteronomy 6:1. He knew that if he could lead Israel to “follow other gods, and serve them and worship them,” they would “surely perish.” Deuteronomy 8:19.

However, the enemy of God's church on the earth had not taken into account the Lord's compassionate nature. It is His glory to be “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity.” Exodus 34:6, 7. Even in the darkest hours of their history, God graciously spread before Israel the things that would benefit the nation. “I taught Ephraim to walk,” He declared through Hosea, “taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them.” Hosea 11:3.

Tenderly the Lord had dealt with them, instructing them by His prophets. If Israel had obeyed the messages of the prophets, they would have been spared humiliation. But because they persisted in turning aside from His law, God was compelled to let them go into captivity. “My people are destroyed for lack

of knowledge,” was His message. “Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you ... ; because you have forgotten the law of your God.” Hosea 4:6.

In every age, the same result has followed transgression of God’s law. In the days of Noah, when iniquity became so deep and widespread that God could no longer tolerate it, the decree went forth, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.” Genesis 6:7. In Abraham’s day the people of Sodom openly defied God and His law; they passed the limits of God’s patient mercy, and the fire of God’s vengeance was kindled against them.

The time preceding the captivity of Israel’s ten tribes was one of similar wickedness. Hosea declared: “The Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land. ‘There is ... swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed.’” Hosea 4:1, 2.

Israel to be “Wanderers Among the Nations”

The ten tribes, long unrepentant, received no promise of complete restoration to their former power in Palestine. Until the end of time they were to be “wanderers among the nations.” But a prophecy through Hosea offered them the privilege of having a part in the final restoration of God’s people at the close of earth’s history. “Many days,” the prophet declared, the ten tribes were to abide “without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward,” the prophet continued, “the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.” Hosea 3:4, 5.

In symbolic language Hosea presented God’s plan of restoring to every repentant one the blessings granted

Israel in the days when they were loyal to Him in the Promised Land. Referring to Israel the Lord declared, “‘I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. And it shall be, in that day,’ says the Lord, ‘that you will call Me, “My husband,” and no longer call Me, “My Master.”’” Hosea 2:15, 16.

In the last days of earth’s history, God will renew His covenant with His commandment-keeping people. “I will betroth you to Me forever; ... in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy... . And you shall know the Lord.” “And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’” Verses 19, 20, 23.

From “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” some will gladly respond to the message, “Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment has come.” They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth and will “worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God’s mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized as those who have kept “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:6, 7, 12.

“I will bring back the captives of My people Israel... . I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be plucked up from the land I have given them.” Amos 9:14, 15.