

Breaking Faith

Hosea 4:1-2

As an individual traverses their sojourn, there will be moments wherein they become disheartened, i.e., “causing someone to lose determination or confidence; discouraging or dispiriting” (Webster’s), “and the spirit grows ‘*dim* or *faint*’” (Psa. 73:3) (nas95). Being disheartened can arise because of external conditions. Ezekiel condemned the false prophets, saying, “I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people from your hands, and they will no longer be in your hands to be hunted; and you will know that I am the LORD. Because you disheartened the righteous with falsehood when I did not cause him grief, but have encouraged the wicked not to turn from his wicked way *and* preserve his life” (Ezek. 13:21-22 | nas95). However, Jehovah can deliver the righteous when focused on that which is above: “*The righteous* cried, and Jehovah heard, and delivered them out of all their troubles. Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, And saveth such as are of a contrite spirit.” (Psa. 34:17-18).

How does a “broken heart,” or “disheartened heart,” apply to the subject of “Breaking Faith”? Therefore, Hosea prophesied to Israel speaking of their unfaithfulness and the ensuing punishment to follow. What Hosea had experienced with his unfaithful wife, Jehovah experienced with Israel: as *Gomer* could not be a wife to Hosea without putting away her adulteries (idolatries), so also Jehovah could not sustain a relationship with Israel, who “said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.” (Hosea 2:5).

In chapter four, the Lord accuses Israel, saying, “Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood” (Hosea 4:1-2).

The sins of Israel: swearing and breaking faith (violating the third and ninth commandments), killing (the sixth commandment), stealing (the eighth commandment) and committing adultery (the seventh commandment).

“Breaking faith”: In Exodus 19:8 and Joshua 1:16 the children of Israel had affirmed that whatever they were commanded of God, “we will do,” but they did not. The term “Breaking faith” (asv) of Hosea 4, has also been translated as, “lying” (kjv), and “deception” (nas95), all of which are well depicted, in Hosea 4:1, saying “Because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land” the various violations of the law ensued.

In addition, the false teachers of Ezekiel’s day “disheartened the righteous with falsehood” (ibid), as they “hunted” for souls (Ezek. 13:20). To witness those who claim to be sustained by “faith,” but are lured away from God by false teachers, (and “break faith) creates a sense of disheartening. They are told that “faith alone” will save them, when the prophet James asks, “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?” (Jam. 2:14), concluding, “faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from *thy* works, and I by my works will show thee *my* faith. Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?” (Jam. 2:17-20). Do not be caught up in the nets of false teachers.

The necessity of an obedient faith is fully expressed in the scriptures. The apostle Paul began his letter to the Romans, saying, “we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith” (1:5), and concluded the epistle, saying, “ by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith: to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.” (Rom. 16:26-27). ret