Article

• *The sadness of God’s heart for the sin of His people*
The sadness of God’s heart for the sin of his people.

In the times of Jeremiah, the people of Israel were in apostasy. This kept actually for quite some years and the writings of many of the prophets are in many cases, not to say in most, pleads for return and repentance and warnings for the coming judgment. Unfortunately, the people of God did not respond to these warnings. Reading some records from Jeremiah and Hosea will show us what great sadness and distress this caused to God. This may sound surprising to our ears as many implicitly or explicitly have difficulties to connect God with feelings we have over situations. Well, God’s Word tells us that we were made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26) and it also shows us that we can make God joyful, pleased, angry or sad. If we think that our behavior has no effects to God’s heart but it only adds some points against us or for us then we are totally wrong. We can make God glad and we can make God sad! All depends on our behavior. In the case of the Israelites of the time of Jeremiah and Hosea, we can see that they had seriously hurt God’s heart. In Jeremiah 8:18-9:3 God is pouring out His heart revealing the effect the rebellious behavior of His people had on Him:

Jeremiah 8:18-9:3

I would comfort myself in sorrow; My heart is faint in me. Listen! The voice, The cry of the daughter of my people from a far country: "Is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her King in her?" "Why have they provoked Me to anger with their carved images - With foreign idols?" "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; Astonishment has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people? Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, and go from them! For they are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And like their bow they have bent their
tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, **and they do not know Me,**" says the LORD.

This is not Jeremiah’s personal sorrow. Many commentators present it as so, but a reading of the passage (see especially the phrases: “they provoked Me” and “says the Lord”) would make clear that it is God that is speaking here. It is God that expresses His heart and feelings here. It is God that was provoked to anger with their images and it He that wanted to leave them and cry endlessly because they didn’t know Him. **God was terribly sorrowful for the sin of His people.** And God is sorrowful when we sin. The New Testament tell us clearly “to grieve not the holy spirit of God, by which we were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). The spirit of God can be grieved. God IS sorrowful when we reject Him. When we willfully forsake His way to walk somewhere else, due to personal passions, wills and ambitions. When instead of bowing down to Him and say “your will be done and not mine” we move ahead carelessly and without fearing Him. The spirit of God is not indifferent but sorrowful in such cases.

**Hosea**

Hosea 11 is another passage where God expresses His feeling towards the apostasy of His people:

Hosea 11
"When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. As they called them, so they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, and burned incense to carved images. "I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. "He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to repent. And the sword shall slash in his cities, devour his districts, and consume them, because of their
own counsels. My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him. "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? **My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man.** The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror. "They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, then His sons shall come trembling from the west; They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses," Says the LORD. "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit; But Judah still walks with God, even with the Holy One who is faithful.”

This passage shows another aspect going on in the heart of God concerning the rebellion of His people. His fierce anger and his sympathy were in struggle in Him. When the Bible says that his people provoked him to anger it is very real! God is a long suffering God and slow to anger but He does get angry! It takes long to make Him angry. He is VERY patient but He can do indeed get angry and rebellion of His people is certainly a main reason. In the above case, it is like God struggling against this anger. His heart was churn within Him!

Many people think of God as an Almighty but rather motionless being. This is not at all true. We have a real relationship with God and as in any relationship we can make him glad, blessed, sad, angry etc and this due to our behavior. Our God is not a set of cold rules which if you follow you will succeed. He is a LIVING GOD desiring a living relationship with each one of His kids. God desires a living relationship with YOU and YOU can make God, the Almighty Creator glad or sad. You can make Him pleased or displeased. Isn’t this amazing? Isn’t amazing that God has opened Himself so much to us human beings, to me and you, so that we can even hurt Him! I find this really amazing!
Our relationship is with the LIVING GOD and it is up to us to make His heart not sad but glad! To make Him not wanting to cry but smile! Amazing!.

Tassos Kioulachoglou