

## ***The Forgotten God***

*“Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars” (Hosea 10:1).*

The prophet Hosea tells us that the more the nation of Israel prospered, the more it sinned. They built altars to Baal, and their hearts were lured into worshipping the false idols of the land. On paper, this doesn't make much sense... How could Israel be blinded to the fact that their prosperity and favor as a nation came from the One True God? How could they, in the years of plenty, turn to the false god Baal instead of to the One True God, Yahweh? Shouldn't they have been returning their gratitude and worship to the Good Creator, Ultimate Provider, and Eternal Sustainer that God is?

You see, days of prosperity and days of plenty have a way of exposing our sinful, indulgent hearts... Much like the nation of Israel in the 8th century B.C., we can certainly have the same heart cravings, especially in times of prosperity and ease. We Christians living in America have plenty of prosperity to go around, even if the economy isn't at its best... It seems that when things are going well, we tend to naturally become comfortable, complacent, and idle. And unfortunately, instead of returning the gratitude and praise towards God and blessing His Holy name for granting us the blessings of His grace, we might be tempted to forget God...

Abraham Lincoln in his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation that he issued in the middle of the Civil War in 1863 is worth a good read here, he wrote: *“We as American's have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God.”* If this was true in Lincoln's day, when slavery was prevalent and we had war within ourselves, well, how much more should we warn ourselves with Lincoln's statements today amid the political conflict and cultural shifts that are taking place. The evidence of a people that has forgotten God, or better yet has no place for God in their heart or worldview view is all around us... And yet please know that I am not writing to warn our nation, but this is a warning for us as the Church. We must be careful not to allow our prosperity and the favor that God has bestowed on us to become a stumbling block. In other words, we must not be like Israel in the days of old, who, in their abundance, lost sight of the hands of the Almighty that supplied that abundance...

And so this Thanksgiving Day, amid the football and food and family discussions, give thanks to Whom thanks is due! Look up to God in gratitude and give Him thanks for all of His blessings. And remind your heart that the grace that you have, both spiritually and physically speaking, has come from the hand of the Lord! Your health, your finances, your family, your food, your home, your car, your clothes, your country, your community, your job, your church, and most importantly, your eternal relationship with God through the finished work of Jesus Christ are all prosperous gifts from Almighty God! Therefore, don't sin by being ungrateful to the Gift Giver, sing to Him with a heart of thanksgiving, and give Him the glory!

May you and your family have a blessed Thanksgiving in the Lord! And may you give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Amen and amen!

Respect the Blood,  
Dalton Mathis