

Hide And Seek

“ . . . I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me early” (Hosea 5:15).

When I was a child my cousins and I often played “Hide and Seek” at our grandmother’s house. Around her place there were plenty of woods, trees, bushes, ditches, and a long porch that made excellent hiding places. Of course, at night we had to be careful not to fall over something and get hurt. We always tried to hide close enough to the house so we could run back to the steps and cry, “Home free!”

We live in a world where people are constantly hiding. Criminals hide from the law, and in some communities the law hides from the criminals. Debtors hide from their creditors, and at times creditors hide from their debtors. Children hide from their parents, and in some cases parents hide from their children. Those who have been hurt in life hide from dominating people, and dominating people sometimes need to hide from those they have hurt.

While we may hide from one another, it is certainly vain to imagine that any of us can hide from God. In fact, earlier the Lord said, “I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from Me” (5:3). In our special Bible text, however, we are confronted with God hiding from man. While we hasten to explain that God doesn’t play childish games, we must understand the serious nature of His hiding His face from us.

God hides His face from those who live independently of Him! In the setting of this verse, we have a list of the sins committed by the people of both the northern and southern kingdoms. They are referred to as those who “commitest whoredom” and the “defiled” (5:3). Warnings are given concerning their “pride” and their “iniquity,” or “idolatrous practices” (5:5). Eventually, in His holiness, the Lord withdraws Himself from all selfish, deceptive ways (see 5:6-7).

God hides His face in a determined fashion! Divine withdrawal is not a trivial matter. Notice the words, “I will go,” in the phrase, “I will go and return to My place.” He does not say, “I might,” or “I could.” Rather, in a determined manner He exclaims, “I will return to My place.” If He says, “I’m going to My place,” it is settled that He won’t be coming by “my” place or “your” place!

God hides His face until there is genuine repentance! Thankfully, He will not hide His face forever! He only hides until “they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face.” As stated elsewhere, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Pro. 28:13). I don’t want God to hide from me, do you? Let us genuinely turn from our selfish, sinful practices, and seek His face until He shows it again.