

LOVE REBUFFED

GOMER'S INGRATITUDE—
SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY

TEXT: 1:1-8

- 1 The word of Jehovah that came unto Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.
- 2 When Jehovah spake at the first by Hosea, Jehovah said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land doth commit great whoredom, departing from Jehovah.
- 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son.
- 4 And Jehovah said unto him, call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.
- 5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.
- 6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And Jehovah said unto him, call her name Lo-ruhamah; for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, that I should in any wise pardon them.
- 7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.
- 8 Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.
- 9 And Jehovah said, Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

QUERIES

- a. Was it right for God to command Hosea to marry an immoral woman?
- b. Why would God command Hosea to do so?
- c. Why did God command Hosea to give such names to his children?

PARAPHRASE

The word of the Covenant God came to Hosea and took possession of him during the reigns of these four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; and during the reign of Jeroboam, son of Joash,

who was king of Israel then. The Lord commanded Hosea, Go and marry a whorish woman and have children of the same character by her. This experience will symbolize the actions of Israel who has committed spiritual whoredom against Me by worshipping other gods. So Hosea married a whorish woman by the name of Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Now the Lord commanded Hosea, Name the child Jezreel (God disperses or God scatters) for I am about to punish the dynasty of Jehu and avenge the blood shed in the valley of Jezreel at which time I will make Israel into a "Jezreel" (dispersed or scattered). That is when I will strip Israel of her military power—I will do it in the very valley of Jezreel. Soon Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Jehovah commanded Hosea, saying, Name this child Loruhamah (She finds no sympathy) and let her name symbolize the fact that I will not show Israel any more mercy to forgive her again. I will, however, have mercy on Judah and save her by My own Mighty Arm—and without any help from her armies or weapons. Now just as soon as Gomer weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to another son. God commanded Hosea, saying, Name this child Lo-ammi (not mine) and let his name symbolize the fact that Israel is not My people any longer and neither will I be their God any more.

SUMMARY

Hosea is commanded to marry a "whorish" woman which symbolizes the attitude of the people of Israel toward God. The prophet is further commanded to give his children symbolical names depicting God's attitude toward the idolatrous people.

COMMENTS

v. 1 THE WORD OF JEHOVAH THAT CAME UNTO HOSEA; The word "came" is from a Hebrew word which is often used to mean "took possession of," and is so used of the evil spirit sent by the Lord upon Saul (I Sam. 16:23; 19:9). What Hosea says to Israel is not simply Hosea's idea of what he thinks God might want to say to Israel—what Hosea says is exactly what God put into his mind to say. Peter writes (II Pet. 1:21), "Being borne along by the Holy Spirit, men spake from God" (translation by Edward J. Young in "Thy Word is Truth"). The prophets possessed the Spirit of Christ (I Pet. 1:10-12), were possessed by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21), so what they wrote did not come by the impulse of men, did not

originate in their minds; what they spoke and wrote originated in the Mind of God and they became the spokesmen. Warfield says, "The term 'borne' is very specific . . . not to be confounded with guiding, directing or controlling or even leading . . . it goes beyond all such terms . . . The things which they (the prophets) spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs." That individuality of expression is apparent in the Biblical writings is obvious. Peter does not express God's message with the same vocabulary and style as John or Paul and vice versa. But this cannot be construed as evidence to deny their infallibility. We quote again from B. B. Warfield: "Revelation is made in both words and deeds; it is necessary therefore that both the words and deeds be recorded inerrantly. If the Lord makes any revelation to man (or through man) He would do so in the language (and style) of the particular man He employs as the organ of His revelation . . . The accommodation of the revealing God to the several prophetic individualities . . . is a concursive operation. The Spirit works confluent in, with and by them elevating them, directing them, controlling them, energizing them, so that, as His instruments, they rise above themselves and under His inspiration (influence) do His work and reach His aim. The product, therefore, which is attained by their means is His product through them . . . Although the circumstance that what is done by and through the action of human powers keeps the product in form and quality in a true sense human, yet the confluent operation of the Holy Spirit throughout the whole process raises the result above what could by any possibility be achieved by mere human powers and constitutes it expressly a supernatural product . . . Even the very words were God's intended words—the apostles were acutely conscious that they were citing immediate words of God; (cf. Gal. 3:16) here Paul hangs an argument on the very words of Scripture and so does Jesus (cf. Jn. 10:34; Mt. 22:32, 43).

Hosea means literally, *Salvation*, or, *the Lord saveth*. His father's name, *Beeri*, means, *my well or welling-forth*. We have already considered the background of the time in which Hosea prophesied (cf. Introduction). There can be very little doubt as to the time of the composition of this book and Hosea's ministry for it is specifically declared to be in the reign of Jeroboam II (see Introduction).

v. 2 JEHOVAH SAID UNTO HOSEA, GO, TAKE THEE A WIFE OF WHOREDOM AND CHILDREN OF WHOREDOM; We have discussed in our Introduction to this book whether Hosea's marriage was an actual,

historical event or whether it was visionary and symbolical. Our view is that it was an actual event which was intended to symbolize the then existing spiritual relationship of Israel to God. G. Campbell Morgan, emphasizing the phrase in this verse "spake at the first," says, ". . . notice very carefully that little phrase, 'at the first.' The writer was looking back, from the end of his ministry, when he was writing out his notes, committing them to manuscript form, and said in effect: When away back there my ministry began, when, before the tragedy came into my life, Jehovah spoke with me, it was He Who commanded me to marry Gomer. The statement distinctly calls her a woman of whoredom, but it does not tell us that she was that at the time. It certainly does mean that God knew the possibilities in the heart of Gomer, and that presently they would be manifested in her conduct, and knowing, He commanded Hosea to marry her, knowing also what his experience would do for him in his prophetic work. When Hosea married Gomer, she was not openly a sinning woman, and the children antedated her infidelity. The earlier life of the prophet was in all likelihood one of joy and happiness."

So Dr. Morgan believes that Gomer had the spirit of harlotry in her heart before Hosea married her but that she did not actually commit adultery until after the children were born. This would be one way to solve the seeming incongruity of God commanding Hosea to marry a woman who had already become a harlot—a command which some think would put God in the position of violating His own Holy Nature. Others say that God simply commanded Hosea to marry a woman of Israel—equating "a woman of whoredom" with the spiritual harlotry of all Israel at that time—and that she became an adulteress after the marriage. The visionary or allegorical interpretation of the marriage does not solve the alleged moral problem here since a command from God to engage in such a relationship would have been just as contrary to the thinking of Hosea as to command the actual thing (see Introduction). Furthermore, as Kirkpatrick points out, ". . . if the prophet had a faithful wife, it seems incredible that he should have exposed her to the suspicion of infidelity, as he must have done by using an allegory which certainly does not bear its allegorical character upon the face of it." Kirkpatrick's view of the situation is like that of G. Campbell Morgan's. Pusey deals with the moral difficulty thusly, "Holy Scripture relates that all this was done, and tells us the births and names of the children, as real history. As such then, must we receive it. We must not imagine things to be unworthy of God, because they do not commend themselves to us

(cf. Isa. 55:8-9). . . . as Sovereign Judge, He commanded the lives of the Canaanites to be taken away by Israel . . . He has ordained that the magistrate should not bear the sword in vain, but has made him His minister, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil (Rom. 13:4) . . . He willed to repay to the Israelites their hard and unjust servitude, by commanding them to spoil the Egyptians (Ex. 3:22) . . . The Prophet was not defiled, by taking as his lawful wife, at God's bidding, one defiled, however hard a thing this was."

God is absolute Sovereign. He may supercede "natural law" as He wishes. He is Lord of all and may command men and nature to do what seems to finite thinking unjust, perhaps immoral, while in His omniscience He is not at all self-contradictory.

Laetsch says that even if Gomer had been guilty of harlotry before Hosea married her, his marrying her would still not have constituted an immoral act for, ". . . An act is immoral, . . . only if it violates a clear command of God. There is no divine commandment forbidding such a marriage, hence no reason to condemn it as immoral, particularly since God *commanded* this marriage. Only priests were forbidden to marry a harlot (Lev. 21:7) . . ."

Kirkpatrick writes, "The true view, which at once relieves the moral difficulty, gives the natural explanation to the narrative, and supplies the key to Hosea's teaching in the experience of his life, is that while we have in these chapters a record of actual facts, Gomer was as yet unstained when Hosea took her to be his wife. The expression used in chapter 1:2 is peculiar. She is not called a harlot, but a *wife* or *woman of whoredom* ("a wife of harlotry," R.S.V.). The hideous tendencies to evil were latent in her heart. The prophet's love did not avail to restrain them . . . She abandoned him for the wild orgies of the licentious worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. Then, as he sat in his homeless home, and pondered over this . . . as he 'watched the ghastly ruins of his life,' he saw that even this cruel calamity was not blind chance but the will of God . . . Then he recognized that it was by God's command that he had chosen the wife who had proved so faithless."

Lange adds, ". . . it is one thing to have intercourse with an unchaste woman, in order to practice fornication with her, and quite another to marry such a woman. The one is as assuredly sinful as the other is in itself not so, any more than it was for Jesus to be a friend of publicans and sinners. For the prophet would not have

entered into such an alliance that he might be assimilated to the woman, but in order to raise her up to his own level, to rescue her from her sinful habits . . ."

It would seem to us that whether God commanded Hosea to marry a woman who, until after marriage had not committed harlotry but who had the spirit of harlotry hidden in her heart—or whether Hosea married a woman whom he knew to already have committed harlotry—God cannot be represented as commanding Hosea to do something immoral for two reasons: (a) To marry even an unchaste woman was not a sin in the Old Testament; (b) to obey any command of God is not immoral—to disobey is immoral.

Whatever the case, the prophet is commanded by God to take a "woman of harlotry" to wife for the express purpose of mirroring to the people of Israel their spiritual relation to Jehovah. It was intended to shock the people's consciences. That which would be shocking enough (a prophet marrying a whorish woman) in the temporal realm representing what they were actually doing in the spiritual realm! Symbolizing the shameful whoredom of Israel in going after (worshipping) calf-gods and Baal is the express purpose of Hosea's marriage to a "woman of whoredom." As a part of this symbolizing, Hosea was to have children by this unchaste woman and to give them symbolical names.

v. 3 SO HE WENT AND TOOK GOMER . . . DAUGHTER OF DIBLAIM; AND SHE CONCEIVED . . . "Gomer" means, "completion; completed whoredom." "Diblain" means, "Daughter of fig-cakes," or some say it may mean, "daughter of embraces." However, there is not the slightest indication from the text that these two names were to have any symbolical significance. We have here a simple statement of historical facts. Hosea married Gomer, she conceived and bare him a son. Lange says the latter part of this verse should be translated, "and she conceived and bore *to him* a son." This removes all doubt, says Lange, as to the father of the child. He was Hosea's child—not an illegitimate one. Laetsch disagrees with Lange; he says that the child was illegitimate but was presented by Gomer to Hosea with the demand that this illegitimate child be accorded all the privileges of one who was his own child. This, says Laetsch, better symbolizes the brazen impudence of Israel. The individual Israelites (illegitimate children of their harlot-mother, Israel) acting with the same impudence demanded recognition from God as children of His while in fact they were not!

v. 4 . . . CALL HIS NAME JEZREEL . . . I WILL AVENGE THE BLOOD OF JEZREEL UPON THE HOUSE OF JEHU . . . In II Kings 9:1ff you may read of Jehu's purging Israel of the prophets of Baal and in II Kings 10:30 you may read where God commended him for carrying out His orders. Yet here Hosea is told that God is going to avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu. Why? Plainly because Jehu is held responsible for the present "whoring" of the whole land in that he perpetuated the calf-worship and Baalism. After Jehu gained the throne through this uprising against Baalism, he arrogantly "struck out for himself a false path" by returning to the worship of the calves. This shows that Jehu's obedience to Jehovah's command was motivated from the very beginning by selfishness and pride. Jezreel means "to sow." God will "Sow" the nation of Israel among the heathen in captivity—He will disperse them. Its opposite use is found in 1:11.

God is about to visit upon the idolatrous offspring of the idolatrous Jehu extermination—the same judgment Jehovah visited, through the hand of Jehu upon the house of Ahab. This promised judgment, symbolized by the name of Hosea's first born, followed not long after the death of Jeroboam II in the murder of his son through the conspiracy of Shallum (II Kings 15:8ff). But God's punishment will not end with the extermination of the dynasty of Jehu, He is going to "cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease." When Shallum murdered the son of Jeroboam II, there began a plunge into political anarchy from which Israel never recovered. Only Menahem had a son for a successor. All the rest of the kings of Israel were overthrown and slain by conspirators. The fall of the house of Jehu was the beginning of the end for Israel.

v. 5 . . . AT THAT DAY . . . I WILL BREAK . . . ISRAEL . . . IN THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL. When the kingdom falls it is to happen in the valley of Jezreel in which the city of Jezreel lay near Mount Gilboa. Ahab built a palace there. Jezebel met her death by being thrown from a window of this palace, and her body was eaten by dogs (II Kings 9:30-35). The valley of Jezreel was the natural battlefield of the northern kingdom (cf. Judges 4:5; 6:33). No definite enemy of Israel is named as the executor of the judgment here pronounced but in the second part of the book of Hosea we learn it will be Assyria. It is not mentioned in the books of the Kings where Assyria dealt the final blow but we must assume Hosea knew where it would occur.

v. 6 . . . SHE BARE A DAUGHTER . . . LO-RUHAMAH . . . I WILL HAVE NO MERCY Lo-ruhamah means literally, "she finds no pity," or, "is not compassionated." It may be significant, as Lange points out, that a female child was chosen to be given this symbolical name for the female can usually find pity when no more is given to men. It makes the fact that God will soon withdraw His compassion all the more emphatic. The prophesied withdrawal of pity here is simply an enlargement of the punishment coming upon Israel foretold earlier by the symbolical name of the son, Jezreel. The ten tribes of Israel would shortly be cut off from the tender mercy of God and scattered by Him, never to be restored as a whole nation. Only those of the ten tribes who returned with Judah in the restoration or were subsequently united to Judah found a place in the holy land again. How long God had suffered with this rebellious and stiff-necked people! How long He had withheld His terrible wrath! How long He had compassionately sent them warning after warning; prophet after prophet; but they would not hearken.

v. 7 BUT I WILL HAVE MERCY UPON THE HOUSE OF JUDAH . . . This verse was intended to be a rebuke to Israel. If Israel had only been like Judah they too would find compassion. Israel was a rebel from its very inception as a nation. It began with idolatry and continually grew more idolatrous and decadent. Judah, on the other hand, retained the true place of worship, the lawful priesthood and the God-ordained lineage of the monarchy. Judah was on the whole, a true witness to God. Judah still trusted in Jehovah for her security and deliverance from her enemies (cw. also Hosea 11:12). The latter half of this verse found fulfillment more than once. When Assyria besieged the city of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah God delivered Judah not by the military might of Judah but by His Own power in sending the death angel to slay 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Furthermore, it was not by battle or military strength that Judah was delivered from her captivity in Persia, but God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to send the people of Judah back to their promised land (cf. Ezra 1:1ff; II Chron. 36:22-23). This verse probably has its ultimate fulfillment in the deliverance to the "Jew who is one inwardly," in Christ since the whole context here is interpreted by both the apostles Paul and Peter as Messianic (cf. Rom. 9:25ff; I Pt. 2:10ff). We will comment at length upon this in verses 10-11 below.

v. 8-9 . . . SHE BARE A SON . . . LO-AMMI . . . FOR YE ARE NOT MY PEOPLE . . . Lo-ammi means literally, "I will not be for you, i.e., not be yours, not belong to you." The covenant relationship between God and His people is to be completely dissolved. They are no longer His. They have "rejected for themselves the counsel of God . . ." and "judged themselves unworthy of God's covenant." They spurned His love. They broke the covenant. They deliberately chose other gods. Therefore, they are not His people. It was their own doing. The blame for their judgment is not to be placed upon God. They are responsible. Their sin is not excusable by ignorance at all! Remember the original covenant God made with Israel was "I will be your God, and you shall be My people . . ." (Lev. 26:12; Ex. 6:7). But when they wilfully rejected Him as their God, how could they any longer be His people?!

QUIZ

1. What does verse one tell us of the method of prophetic revelation and inspiration?
2. Was Hosea's marriage an actual marriage or symbolical or visionary? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Would it be wrong for God to command a prophet to marry a "woman of whoredom?" Explain!
4. Were the children born those of Hosea or were they illegitimate?
5. What symbolical significance is attached to the name "Jezreel"?
6. What does Lo-ruhamah mean and what application does it have to Israel?
7. Why did God say of Israel, "ye are not my people, and I will not be your God"?

GOMER'S INGRATITUDE— SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY

TEXT 1:10-11

- 10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.
- 11 And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

QUERIES

- a. When would they be called "sons of the living God?"
- b. How will they be "gathered together?"
- c. Who will be the "one head" appointed over them?

PARAPHRASE

Yet in spite of the judgment of God that is surely coming, God will just as surely keep the covenant He made with Abraham when He promised that his descendants would be as innumerable as the sand of the sea. It shall come to pass that just as it has been said Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto all, both Jew and Gentile, who follow the example of Abraham's faith, Ye are the sons of the living God. And all the people of God, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be united together in one spiritual nation and they shall have one Leader, the Messiah, over them and they shall be delivered from their bondage. Out of the "sowing" (Jezreel) of judgment God will bring a great, victorious day of "sowing" (Jezreel), a new "sowing of a new Israel.

SUMMARY

Immediately upon the announcement of the complete judgment and rejection of the northern kingdom of Israel follows an announcement of deliverance and covenant fulfillment to spiritual Israel.

COMMENT

v. 10 . . . ISRAEL SHALL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA . . . AND . . . IT SHALL BE SAID UNTO THEM, YE ARE THE SONS OF THE LIVING GOD. It is very interesting to note here that the opening phrase of this verse is almost verbatim the words of the covenant promise made to Abraham in Gen. 22:17; 32:13. This confirms our Introductory principle of interpretation called "Covenant Background." All the events of history, as interpreted by the Prophets, take place on a *covenant background*. Even the future restoration of the Jews to Palestine after the Babylonian captivity in the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, and, the future kingdom of God under the Messiah, the New Testament Church, is portrayed as the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham.

Hosea announces the complete rejection of Israel, the northern kingdom, from being God's people. Some of the faithful remnant might then conclude that God had forgotten His immutable covenant with Abraham. So Hosea is directed by God to write that Jehovah will

eventually fulfill His covenant with Abraham (to make of Israel an innumerable people), even though the physical nation of Israel would be forever overthrown.

Perhaps this received its initial fulfillment in the restoration under Zerubbabel when a few of the Ten Tribes returned to Palestine in company with the nation of Judah. But its primary fulfillment is to be found in the founding of New Israel, the Christian Church, under the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. This cannot be misunderstood! It has the sanction of apostolic pronouncement (cf. I Pet. 2:10; Rom. 9:25). The restoration of the Jews in 536 B.C. was only typical of the New Israel to be instituted on the Day of Pentecost.

Lange says, "As to the main application of these verses, it is probably best to regard its promise as partially and but to a very small degree fulfilled in the case of those out of the Ten Tribes who returned to Jerusalem after the Exile, and to be constantly undergoing its fulfillment in the increase of the true Israel until the 'great multitude which no man could number of all nations' (the 144,000, the mystical number of those sealed of the *twelve* tribes of Israel), shall be completed. That the Messianic application is almost exclusively the true one is evident both from the grand comprehensiveness of the promise, and from paucity of evidence as to subsequent reunion to any extent of the representatives of the two kingdoms."

Pusey says, "Both St. Peter and St. Paul tell us that this prophecy is already, in Christ, fulfilled in those of Israel, who wear the true Israel, or of the Gentiles to whom the promise was made . . ."

Peter applies the prophecy to "the exiles of the Dispersion" in his day while Paul specifically applies it to the Gentiles in Romans 9:25. The Gentiles, formerly called "not My people," would henceforth, by believing in the Seed of Abraham, be called "My people."

v. 11 . . . JUDAH . . . AND . . . ISRAEL SHALL BE GATHERED TOGETHER . . . ONE HEAD . . . UP FROM THE LAND . . . GREAT . . . THE DAY OF JEZREEL. Pusey says, "A little image of this union was seen after the captivity in Babylon when some of the children of Israel, i.e. of the ten tribes, were united to Judah on his return, and the great schism of the two kingdoms came to an end. More fully, both literal Judah and Israel were gathered into one in the one Church of Christ, and all the spiritual Judah and Israel; i.e. as many of the Gentiles, as by following the faith, became the sons of faithful Abraham, and heirs of the promise to him."

Ezekiel symbolizes the union of all God's people under the leadership of one shepherd, David (the Messiah) in Ezekiel 34:1-24. Ezekiel symbolizes the same Messianic union by the two "staffs" in Ezekiel 37:15-28, (cf. also Jer. 3:15-18; Isa. 11:12-13). This, of course, finds its fulfillment in such N.T. scriptures as Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:4-11; etc.

The name Jezreel loses its stigma. Henceforth it will be great. Jezreel means, as we have pointed out before, "sowing." There, in 1:4 it meant God would disperse them in judgment. Here in 1:11 it is used in an exactly opposite way to mean that God will, out of the wreckage of former Israel, make a new sowing or planting and raise up a New Israel.

QUIZ

1. How do these two verses fit into our principle of interpretation called "Covenant Background."
2. Where in the New Testament do we have an inspired interpretation of the fulfillment of these two verses?
3. How can the Gentiles be included in the fulfillment of these verses?
4. What other O.T. scriptures refer to the union of Israel and Judah in a Messianic sense?
5. What does the name Jezreel signify used in this context as compared to Hosea 1:4?

ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE— SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY

TEXT: 2:1-5

- 1 Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.
- 2 Contend with your mother, contend; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; and let her put away her whoredoms from her face, and her adulteries from between her breasts;
- 3 lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.
- 4 Yea, upon her children will I have no mercy; for they are children of whoredom;
- 5 for their mother hath played the harlot; she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she 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.