

v. 23 AND I WILL SOW HER UNTO ME IN THE EARTH . . . AND I WILL HAVE MERCY . . . AND . . . SAY TO THEM . . . THOU ART MY PEOPLE . . . The new Israel comes as a result of a *new* sowing—one of Divine grace instead of Divine judgment. The former references to "Jezreel" (1:4, 5, 11) had to do with "scattering" or "dispersing" rebellious Israel by the judgment of God in captivity. But now, through the "seed of Abraham" (singular, cf. Gal. 3:16), God sows a new covenant nation, the one noted in I Pet. 1:9-10 and Romans 9:19-26. So the name "Jezreel" is turned into something blessed, just as the names in Hosea 1:6, 9; 2:1 were changed into blessing. Lange says of this section, "The fulfillment is not to be seen in the return of the Jews from the exile. This was, to be sure, a fulfillment, but only a small and feeble beginning. For the promise is to be regarded as essentially Messianic . . . in Christ the new 'betrothal' of God to his people has already taken place . . . Israel, to whom salvation is here promised by the Prophet, comes into view, not according to its natural nationality, but according to its divine destiny, or according to its typical significance as the *People of God*." This we heartily endorse because to interpret it otherwise would be to contradict inspired, apostolically confirmed fulfillment, as we have shown before.

### QUIZ

1. What specific historical age does "in that day" refer to here?
2. What confirmation do we have as to the fulfillment of this section?
3. What does the figurative language represent here?
4. What new meaning is given to the name "Jezreel" here?

## LOVE RECONCILING— GOMER LOVED

TEXT: 3:1-5

- 1 And Jehovah said unto me, Go again, love a woman beloved of her friend, and an adulteress, even as Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins.
- 2 So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer of barley, and a half-homer of barley;
- 3 and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife: so will I also be toward thee.

- 4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim:
- 5 afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days.

### QUERIES

- a. Who is Hosea's command to "Go again" and "love"?
- b. Why did Hosea insist that they must live in continency?
- c. What is the connection between Hosea's action and God's?

### PARAPHRASE

Then the Lord said to me, Go, get the wife whom you love, that woman who has been an adulteress, and bring her back and love her again. This will symbolize the love Jehovah has for His wife, the spiritually adulterous nation of Israel, which has turned to other gods and has sensually worshipped them. So I bought her back from her degradation for the price of a slave, fifteen shekels of silver and fifteen shekels-worth of barley, and I told her, You must live in complete conjugal abstinence for many days; you must not again play the harlot nor shall you be permitted to have intercourse with your husband and I, your husband, will act the same towards you. This will symbolize the many years of captivity that are coming upon Israel when she shall dwell without civil leadership, without religion and without a revelation from God and without any idols. After their period of chastening the children of Israel shall turn and seek Jehovah their God, and their Messiah-king, and they shall come trembling at their own unworthiness and at the holiness and goodness of Jehovah in the Messianic dispensation.

### SUMMARY

This very short chapter completes the heart-rending account of Hosea's marriage. Hosea redeems Gomer; Gomer is chastened in order that she may repent; the account ends leaving us to assume Gomer's reconciliation. It all is to symbolize God's dealing with adulterous Israel ending in Messianic blessings.

## COMMENT

v. 1 . . . GO AGAIN, LOVE A WOMAN BELOVED OF HER FRIEND . . . This chapter opens with an authentic note—a command from Jehovah. Hosea is commanded to love again a "woman beloved of her friend." The word in the original for "friend" would better be translated here *companion*, for it denotes a friend or companion, with whom one cherishes intercourse and fellowship, one with whom another lives in the closest intimacy. The woman beloved of such a "friend" can only be Gomer and the friend can only be Hosea. Gomer is called a woman *ishab*, not, thy wife, *ishteca*, in order to describe the state of separation in which she was living. Hosea is bidden to take the initiative and act toward Gomer with love even when she was unloved and unloveable! Hosea was to love her freely, just as God loved Israel freely (cf. Hosea 14:4). God took the initiative and "lured" Israel wooing her back to Himself (cf. Hosea 2:14ff). It is plain that what Hosea will experience in loving "again" his wife is to symbolize what God's experience is with Israel when He shall have redeemed her from her captivities and loved her again in the Messiah. Raisin cakes are delicacies, figuratively representing that idolatrous worship which appeals to the senses and gratifies the carnal impulses and desires (cf. Job 20:12 and Jer. 7:18). Loving such carnal indulgence is the reason Israel turned to other gods!

v. 2 SO I BOUGHT HER TO ME FOR FIFTEEN PIECES OF SILVER . . . Evidently, Gomer had fallen to such depths as to be sold from one owner to another like a common slave. Perhaps her first paramours, having satisfied themselves, grew tired of her and sold her into slavery. This is always the end of illegitimate love, or false love. Sensual love or carnal love always tires and grows cold. True love is altogether different. True love always seeks the good of the other person. True love is a love that loves with the mind, the heart, the will and not just with the flesh. True love is described in I Corinthians, chapter 13, and the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15, and the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10. Gomer thought her paramours loved her, but she was to find out that only Hosea truly loved her.

What Hosea paid for her (since at that time an ephah of barley was worth one shekel and Hosea paid 15 pieces of silver and 15 ephahs of barley) was the price of a slave, 30 shekels (cf. Ex. 21:32). It is interesting indeed that the price paid for Jesus' betrayal was 30 pieces of silver (cf. Zech 11:12). Gomer was redeemed for 30 shekels and

our redemption (though His blood was more precious than all the silver and gold ever coined) was obtained for 30 pieces of silver.

v. 3 . . . THOU SHALT ABIDE FOR ME MANY DAYS . . . AND THOU SHALT NOT BE ANY MAN'S WIFE . . . Gomer is to abide in the house of Hosea in a state of conjugal abstinence for many days. She is not to be allowed to engage in sexual intercourse with any man for a long period of time, not even with her husband, and especially not with other men. This is to be a period of chastening and testing. It is done out of love for her in order to reform her and train her up as a faithful wife. She must prove her fidelity and repentance before she is restored to full wifeness.

v. 4 FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SHALL ABIDE MANY DAYS WITHOUT KING . . . Now we see that Gomer's experience symbolized the experience of Israel during her captivities and afterward until the coming of Christ (David their king). "King and prince" represent civil government. Israel's polity ceased at the Assyrian captivity in 721 B.C. "Sacrifice and pillar" represent Israel's syncretistic religion. Israel's religion was obliterated with the captivity. "Ephod and Teraphim" represent the two means (Mosaic and idolatrous) of receiving religious revelations.

And so for 700 years the 10 northern tribes (except those who returned to Palestine with Judah in 536 B.C.) waited for God, as Gomer waited for her husband, kept apart from God under His care, yet not acknowledged by Him; not following after their idolatries, yet cut off from the sacrificial worship which He had appointed, cut off also from revelations from Him. Into this estranged condition Israel was brought by the Assyrian captivity (721 B.C.) and ever since they have remained in it, unless they have turned to "David their king."

v. 5 AFTERWARD SHALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL RETURN, AND SEEK . . . DAVID THEIR KING . . . IN THE LATTER DAYS . . . After Israel has been estranged from God for a long season she will *turn back* (the meaning of the original) and seek God. The Hebrew word for *seek* is the intensive seeking like that seeking which Christ enjoins in the Sermon on the Mount, "Keep on seeking and ye shall find . . ." It means a diligent search.

"David their king" is no other than the Messiah, the Son of David. K & D say, "we must not understand it . . . as referring to such historical representatives of the Davidic government as Zerubbabel, and other earthly representatives of the house of David, since the return of

the Israelites to 'their King David' was not to take place till (the end of the days.)" Every school of the ancient Jews (Talmudic, mystical, Biblical or grammatical) explained this prophecy of Christ, the Messiah. They even paraphrased it thus: "Afterward the children of Israel shall repent, or turn by repentance, and shall seek the service of the Lord their God, and shall obey the Messiah the Son of David, their King." Such an interpretation is found in some of the Targums and the Midrash and by such authors as Ibn Ezra and Kimchi. (cf. also Ezek. 34:23-24; Jer. 23:5-6).

The "fear" with which they come is a reverence and holy awe which causes them to "flee to Him for help." It is a reverent dependence upon Him which impels them toward God for fear of losing Him.

The "latter days" is, in Hebrew *acbarith bayyamim*, and means the final dispensation of God. That final dispensation is, of course, the Gospel dispensation. There will be no other age after the second coming of Christ (Heb. 9:27-28). Even the Jews (Kimchi so interpreted it: "Whenever it is said in the latter days, it is meant the days of the Messiah." This prophecy has been fulfilled ever since the coming of Christ and the establishment of the church when Jews of all tribes obeyed the commands of Christ and the apostles and became christians. All the Israel that is ever going to be saved (Rom. 11:26) is the "Israel of God" (including Gentiles) who seek God through the Son (David's son according to the flesh) during the Gospel dispensation. When Jesus comes again, the Gospel dispensation will be over—all dispensations of time will be over—and all Israel will then have been saved. Anyone found outside of Christ at that time will not belong to the Israel of God and there will be no further offer of salvation—only judgment. These are the latter days! (cf. Isa. 2:2, etc.)

## QUIZ

1. Who is the "woman" whom Hosea is to love?
2. Who is the "friend" of the woman?
3. How much did Hosea pay for this woman? What did this signify?
4. Why did Hosea require her to live in conjugal abstinence?
5. How long did Israel remain estranged from God?
6. Who is "David their king?"
7. What are the "latter days?"
8. What symbolical relationship does all this have to God and Israel?