

Hosea and Gomer

A Look into the Heart of God

Hosea 3:1-3

Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God; But only he who sees, takes off his shoes - The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries. --Elizabeth Barrett Browning

There is not a more poignant love story in the Bible than that of Hosea and Gomer. It is heart wrenching, the most emotionally intense account of love the Bible offers. In this account of a prophet and his prostitute wife, we find exposed in an exceptionally odd manner the depths of God's heart. In this, we come to know our Father in ways rarely appreciated.

The Cast

- Hosea (a young prophet of the Northern Kingdom who would serve God about 59 years)
- Gomer (either a prostitute or one soon to become one, name meaning "complete")
- Jezreel (a son, name meaning either "God scatters" or "God sows")
- Lo-ruhamah (a daughter, name meaning "no compassion")
- Lo-ammi (a daughter, name meaning "not my people")

The Basic Story (Chapters 1-3)

- Hosea is told by God to marry a wife of harlotry.
- She bears him three children, all of whom are named so as to indicate the coming punishment God will enact on his rebellious, wicked people.
- Gomer then returns to prostitution.
- As she ages and can no longer successfully ply her trade, she is put up for sale as a slave—the asking price being the lowest allowed by law.
- Hosea buys her back to again be his wife.

The Story Within the Story (Chapters 4-14)

- God's bride Israel abandoned Him for other lovers (idols, Assyria, Egypt, wealth, pride, etc.)
- Israel was destroyed as a nation (II Kgs. 17:6)
- Compassion was removed (II Kgs. 17:7-18)
- Their Jewish ethnicity was taken away (II Kgs. 17:24)
- As Samaritans they eventually purged themselves of idols, but lacked God as a husband (Jn. 4:20-26)
- God, in Christ, bought back His wife when her only value was that He loved her (cf. Rom. 5:6-8)—she became "complete," once again a holy nation, the object of God's great compassion, and a people for His special possession (Jn. 4:39-42; Matt. 4:12-16; Acts 8:4-13; I Pet. 2:9; note Hos. 1:10-2:1; 2:23; 6:4-6; 13:5-6; 11:8-11)
- By the way, the name "Hosea" means "Jehovah delivers" and is from the Hebrew root word from which we get "Joshua," the Jewish name of Jesus.