

## THE VALLEY OF ACHOR FOR A DOOR OF HOPE

**Text: HOSEA 2:1-23**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. In the book of Hosea, Hosea represents the LORD, and Gomer his unfaithful wife pictures the nation Israel. Their children have significant names: Jezreel ("God will Scatter"), Lo-ruhamah ("No More Mercy"), and Lo-ammi ("Not My People").
2. Everything is designed to illustrate the relationship between the LORD and the nation Israel.
3. Hosea preached to an unfaithful people who had turned their backs on God and started worshipping idols.
4. There is an expression found many times in the Bible, and it is found twice in the book of Hosea -- the people of Israel "went a whoring after false gods."
5. First Chronicles 5:25 says, "And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them" (cf. Hosea 2:5; 4:12; 9:1).
6. What makes Hosea's message so unique was that as he preached about how sin breaks God's heart, his own was broken.
7. Yet in spite of Gomer's unfaithfulness, Hosea loved her and brought her back from sin and degradation. This is a vivid picture of God's grace.
8. Today, as we move into chapter 2, we see that Hosea's own personal tragedy recedes into the background as Israel herself is weighed in the balances and found wanting.
9. The great Bible expositor, G. Campbell Morgan, points out that 2:2 "is not the language of Hosea to his children about Gomer. That is the language of God concerning the nation. Here the prophet was delivering a message to the nation of Israel from God, but his language was the result of bitterness of his own heart, and the sorrows through which he had passed."

ISRAEL WARNED (2:1-5)

ISRAEL CHASTENED (2:6-13)

ISRAEL RESTORED (2:14-23)

### **I. ISRAEL WARNED (2:1-5)**

1. Beginning here in 2:1, Hosea is told to speak to a faithful remnant of the nation. These faithful "brethren" are referred to as Ammi ("My people") and Ruhamah ("having obtained mercy").
2. They were to "plead" with the rest of the nation of Israel to put away their idolatry and whoredoms lest God strip them naked and send them a draught (2:2, 3).
3. This is a strong warning – if Israel does not repent, they will be judged severely by God.
4. "Plead" indicates strong contention, because Israel, like Gomer, was unfaithful and acted like a harlot (cf. Jer. 3:6-14).
5. According to our Lord, the greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our mind, and all our strength (Mark 12:28-31).
6. Therefore, the greatest sin is to be unfaithful to the God who has created us and loves us and sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for us.
7. God would "strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born" (2:3), i.e., the day of her deliverance from Egypt (cf. 2:15b).
8. God will also show no more mercy upon "the children of whoredoms" (2:4). Not only was Israel guilty in a collective sense, but individually as well.
9. Israel went after idols and the false gods of the heathen, and then gave these idols and false gods the credit for supplying them with bread and water, wool and flax, oil and drink – food, clothing, and luxury items (2:5; cf. 2:8; Jer. 44:15-23).
10. S. Franklin Logsdon said, "And let us notice the blasphemy apparent in the latter part of verse 5. They had the audacity to state that their idols furnished their necessary provisions, thus robbing divine Providence of His glory. Such an attitude is inevitable of serious consequences" (*Hosea, People Who Forgot God*).
11. Israel was mixed up with an Old Testament version of the modern-day "prosperity gospel," i.e., if people worshiped Baal and other pagan gods, they would prosper.
12. This error is very popular today, the idea that if you are in right relationship with God, you will be prosperous. It is foolish and it is totally unscriptural.
13. If God has prospered us then we should be thankful to God. But the human race is marked by ingratitude. Just as Gomer turned away from her husband and practiced harlotry, Israel turned away from God and

practiced spiritual harlotry. And today, the majority of mankind has turned from God.

14. Sadly, even many Christians are guilty of the sin of ingratitude.

## **II. ISRAEL CHASTENED (2:6-13)**

1. After warning them, God says: "Therefore..." (2:6). Her way would be hedged up with thorns. The LORD would make a wall -- a roadblocks, an obstruction in her way to cut her off from her idols until she decides to return to her "first husband" (2:7), i.e. God.
2. J. Vernon McGee made an interesting statement. He said that God sent the depression to America to warn us. But America did not repent and so God sent WW II.
3. And then came the Korean War and Viet Nam. Dr. McGee then said: "If we had been sending our boys over there (referring to Korea and Viet Nam) as missionaries to give those people the gospel, we would not have had to send our boys over there to die or to suffer in the prison camps. Back of all our problems is the big problem that we are not recognizing God."
4. Like an old harlot who has lost her good looks and has nowhere to go, Israel will finally decide to go back to God -- like the prodigal son who climbed out of the hog pen and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (Luke 15:18).
5. Sin and idolatry had blinded Israel to the fact that it was God who had given her their corn and wine and clothing (2:8). God gave them silver and gold and they used it to make idols for Baal (2:8).
6. A lack of knowledge of the Bible always gets people into trouble. God had already told them that it is He who sends the rain and provides the food (Deut. 11:13-17).
7. One of the major themes of Hosea is knowledge and lack of knowledge (cf. 4:6; 6:3-6; 7:9).
8. "Therefore..." (2:9) God will judge them for their ingratitude and their willful ignorance and their idolatry. He will cut off her food and clothing and uncover her lewdness (2:10).
9. Israel was a whore but she was a religious whore (2:11). Like the harlot in Proverbs 7, who says, "I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows" (Pro. 7:14).
10. But Hosea 2:12 says God will destroy her vines and fig trees which she thought were her rewards for following Baal.

11. "The days of Baalim" indicate that Israel would be punished for all the days she worshipped Baal instead of the true God (2:13).
12. "Baalim" is the plural of Baal. The Hebrew word *Baal* means "lord" or "master" or "owner." When the Israelites entered Canaan, every piece of land had its own deity, its "owner." A good concordance or index (e.g. dictionary of proper names in back of Scofield Bible) lists the many gods with the name Baal (e.g. Baal-peor, Baal-zebub).

### **III. ISRAEL RESTORED (2:14-23)**

1. After God's severe judgment, comes God's matchless grace (2:14).
2. God "will give her her vineyards" (2:15) and she will sing as in the time when she came up out of the land of Egypt. The northern kingdom of Israel has never been restored, therefore this prophecy must have reference to the millennium (cf. 1:10, 11).
3. The key verse in this chapter is 2:15. The valley of Achor literally means the valley of trouble. Achan, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had were brought into the valley of Achor, and were stoned with stones, and burned with fire (cf. Josh. 7:24-26).
4. But the trouble at Achor was soon turned into joy at the victory at Ai, which opened up the land for the Israelites (Josh. 7&8).
5. In a similar manner, the trouble of Israel's long scattering among the nations will one day be their "door of hope" to millennial restoration and blessings (2:15).
6. Israel will then call God "Ishi" ("my husband"), and not "Baali" ("my lord") (2:16).
7. The people of Israel were placing the true God on the same level as Baal and were worshipping both. But after they repent, they will be cleansed from Baal worship even to the degree of forgetting the names of Baalim (2:17).
8. Zechariah 13:1 and 2 says, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land."
9. After Israel repents, God in His mercy and grace will allow them the privilege of calling Him "Ishi," i.e., "my husband" (Hosea 2:16).

10. A new covenant will be made with the beasts of the field. Wild animals will be harmless and warfare will be ended (2:18).
11. Isaiah 11:6 says, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."
12. Israel will be married to the LORD forever (2:19, 20). This says much about the grace of God. He blots out sin forever. Israel is no longer seen as a harlot or as an adulteress but as a faithful wife.
13. "In that day" (2:21) is a technical term for the last days.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Let me summarize: When the Lord returns, Israel will no longer be a harlot but a faithful wife (2:19, 20).
2. Every curse shall not only be averted, but will be turned into blessing (2:14ff).
3. Israel will be comforted (2:14).
4. The land will be fruitful (2:15, 22).
5. Idolatry will be removed forever (2:17).
6. After God's judgment will come peace and safety (2:18).
7. Israel will be restored (2:19, 23). "Amills" do not like this.
8. There will be a national conversion (2:20, 23).
9. Truly the valley of Achor (trouble) shall be the door of hope. God has opened for us a door of hope but first we have to go through the valley of Achor (trouble).
10. But He will see us through if we listen to Him. He is speaking "comfortably" to us through His Word (2:14). Are we listening?