

## Hosea 2:2-15

Places are important in the Bible (E.g. **Jer 7:12; Hos 1:4-5**). "Achor" means "trouble," and for Israel stood for the place where God's judgment on one sinful troublemaker, Achan, was fulfilled (**Josh 7:25-26**). The Valley of Achor is mentioned again in **Hos 2:15** to summarize God's judgment of Gomer's adulterous ways, which depicted the idolatry of Israel. In a great reversal, however, the place of judgment will become a "door of hope."

### Summary

**Hosea 2:2-15 begins with an opening statement of Israel's sin followed by the Lord's response but Hosea also foretells that the place of judgment, the valley of Achor, is intended by God to become an instrument of mercy.**

#### 1. Sordid Results vv. 2-5a

**Hos 2:2-5** warn Gomer of impending judgment, showing us the sordid results of sin. Her continued adultery would result in a final alienation from her husband (**Hos 2:2**). The Bible portrays God's covenant with his people in terms of a marriage relationship. Gomer depicted the Israelites, who thought their covenant heritage meant that the Lord would never expel them, even if they were unfaithful but God demanded their faithfulness.

Sin breeds alienation, shame and dissatisfaction (**2:3**).

In addition, sin often results in damage to family and friends (**2:4-5**).

God's anger for Gomer's and Israel's sin is no surprise, and we do well to be warned against sin by its results. What is somewhat surprising, however, is the God's attitude. As the Lord commands the children to plead with their mother, we see his compassion for sinners.

#### 2. Patient Provision vv. 5b-8

The remainder of this passage shows how God worked for Israel's deliverance, portrayed through the behavior of Hosea to unfaithful Gomer.

The first of the three "therefore" sections depicts God's patient provision for his people even whilst they descended into the depraved depths of sin. Gomer was like a discontented wife who thinks she could do better with a different man (**2:5b**). In this, she depicts the idolatrous people of Israel in pursuit of false gods. Likewise, people today turn from God in the belief that this world's ways will provide a better standard of life and a readier source of pleasure.

The Lord responded in love with provision for his people. First, he provided a hedge of thorns (**Hos. 2:6**). God's aim is: She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them, and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then she shall

say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now' (**Hos. 2:7**). When Christians are committed to a path of sin, they will often find that God places thorn hedges in their path (E.g. David; **2 Sam 11:3**). Similarly, God will often seek to arouse the conscience of backsliding Christians and put circumstantial barriers in the way. In addition, the Lord continues to provide for his people's needs even while they sin (**Hosea 2:8**).

### 3. Painful Discipline vv. 9-13

Gomer continued in her path of sin and her lack of repentance led to painful discipline (**Hos 2:9**). Hence the Lord delivered the shame that he had threatened earlier (**Hos 2:10**). God would also remove the joy from Israel's feasts (**Hos 2:11**). Like Gomer, having loved the gifts instead of the Giver, Israel would suffer the removal of all her coveted goods (**Hos 2:12**). God will not bless our idolatry, in whatever shape it takes (**Num 32:23; Hos 2:13**). Here we see the Lord's fatherly painful discipline of His children (**Heb 12:7-11**).

### 4. Pursuing Love vv. 14-15

This brings us to the Valley of Achor, where the death of Achan satisfied God's wrath and brought victory back to the people of Israel. First, Hosea takes Israel back to the wilderness journey in the exodus, when Israel was first taught to honor the Lord in faith (**Hos. 2:14**). The wilderness for Israel was a place of spiritual clarity and unambiguous divine provision. For idolatrous Israel, this wilderness would ultimately be the exile, where she would be assimilated into the Gentile nations and later hear the gospel message of Jesus Christ. There the Lord would "allure her" and "speak tenderly" with the message of forgiveness of sins through the blood of his saving Son. The Valley of Achor depicted a place where Israel's love for God was purified. In the Valley of Achor, one man died so that God's judgment on sin was turned aside. In the first Valley of Achor, it was Achan who died for his own sin but who would die in the valley to which Hosea says God will now bring his people? The answer: Jesus Christ, God's own Son, who had no sin of his own but died for the guilt of all who trust in him.

If you are a believer whose present situation is found somewhere in Gomer's progress of folly and sin, God speaks tenderly to you through the cross of his Son, Jesus. If you are truly his, then by the grace of his Spirit you will respond as in the words of **Hos. 2:15**. If you turn to him in a renewed faith, God will hurry to restore the spiritual blessings that you have forfeited in sin. God will "make the Valley of Achor a door of hope" (**Hos 2:15**).