

Gomer

The name Gomer is mentioned six times in the Old Testament. Five times it refers to the first born son on Japheth who was one of the three sons of Noah. The name means, “Completion, or heat”. He was the father of the Cimmerian who first settled on the northern shores of the Baltic Sea, a region known as Crimea. The Gauls and Celts of ancient times and the more modern Germans, French and British are descendants of Gomer. In the Hebrew Talmud, Gomer is referred to as Germany. What is now Germany was first called Gomerland. Some old maps call that area Askenaz, after one of the sons of Gomer. In Ezekiel 38:6 Gomer, which must now be considered Germany is part of the alliance with Russia that will march against Israel in the predicted battle of Armageddon that may now be close on our horizon.

However, this is not the Gomer here under consideration. The sixth mention of Gomer in Scripture is in Hosea 1:3. Here spoken of only once, it is the name of Hosea’s wife. We know nothing about this Gomer except that she was a prostitute and that her father’s name was Diblaim, which means “double embrace.”

This is not intended to be a study of the Book of Hosea, but only an excerpt focusing on Gomer as a type that God used to depict the condition of His chosen people, Israel, at the time when their departure from God was reaching the point where His wrath was about to descend on them unless they changed their ways. In His long suffering, patience, He had sent many prophets to warn the people that continuation of their sinful ways would bring their destruction as a nation. Hosea’s message applied primarily to Israel that is the northern kingdom that was soon to be obliterated by the Assyrians. However, it also applied to Judah, as it too was in deep apostasy and destined eventually to a similar fate. It is also through Hosea that God conveys to all generations, perhaps the most profoundly important verse in all of Scripture. In chapter 4 verse 6 God says *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...”* This verse is worthy of a book’s worth of commentary. I pray you think about it, perhaps first considering that faith itself cannot exist unless there is some amount of

knowledge regarding that in which one places his or her faith. Israel was paying homage to God through faithless rituals while their stronger faith was centered on their pagan idols. These words spoken by God apply as, or even more, to present day America.

As simply another way of conveying this message, God commissioned Hosea to act it out in real life, a “stage play, where Hosea played the part of God and Gomer, His wife, was His people Israel. The “play,” was more than a means of expressing their present state as a nation in whoredom, both physically and spiritually. It also expressed how their fate would be by dispersions and slavery, and also how in the distant future they would return to Him, and in doing so, finally receives the fullness of God’s covenants with Abraham and with David. Based on historical studies, there was a time, even as little as sixty years ago, when it might have been possible for a Christian revival to have happened. However, in the 2016, that is long passed possible. As it was for Israel at the time of Hosea, so it is today. The time and the possibility of this country being spared the fate to which Israel was subjected is gone, and its fate will be similar to that which was Israel’s. All the signs are there for those with eyes to see. They point to the fate that I believe will be as, or even more terrible than was that of Israel in 711BC.

A brief summary of the play as it might appear on, say, a modern “play bill,” is as follows:

“God instructs Hosea to take a wife who is a prostitute. The role of God is played by the prophet Hosea, and Israel, the unfaithful wife of God, is played by a genuine prostitute by the name of Gomer. In real life Hosea really loves Gomer in spite of her unfaithfulness, just as God has an eternal love for His wife Israel. Gomer leaves Hosea and lives with her lovers who offer her luxuries that she values more than the security and comfort of a faithful loving husband. So too, has Israel left God her loving faithful husband in pursuit and worship of idols who seem to better satisfy her desires for carnal luxuries and pleasures. The play continues on expressing many facets of this strange relationship including Gomer’s descent to the depths of depravity after which Hosea’s (God’s)

generous loving heart redeems her, restores her legitimacy as the faithful wife He had always intended her to be.

Scripture tells us that Hosea and Gomer had three children, which God named in ways that enrich the message that He means to provide through this “play”. For instance, God names the third child, “Lo-amni” which means “you are not my people.” In this manner God was saying that he had divorced His wife Israel and therefore she was no longer His people, at least for a while. Later, as part of the “final act” of the “play” God removed the “Lo” from the name, again restoring them as a His people. This, of course will take place near the end of the Great Tribulation, when as He says in Hosea 5:15, *“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”* This also goes nicely with Zachariah 12:10 that tells us, *“And I pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced...”*

It’s difficult to focus on Gomer as the topic here without doing an expository on the whole book. However, let us try. In accordance with God’s directive, Hosea chose Gomer to be his wife knowing full well of her amoral nature and that she was a prostitute. We find that he did indeed love her sincerely, and to the end. It is evident that it was an unrequited love, for she had no qualms about leaving him for “greener pastures” with multiple lovers. She must have been a beautiful sensual women to have been able to attract such lovers who would keep her in fine jewelry and other luxuries she so coveted. This must have gone on for years as poor Hosea cared for their children, served God and prayed for her return. Hasn’t God also continued to care for Israel’s children and waited patiently for her return? It seems as though we may assume that, as it was with God toward Israel, so also did Hosea see something deeper in her than her fleshly beauty for him to have such a boundless unrelenting, long suffering love as we see portrayed in this story. As a faithful servant of God he would not have remained as faithful if flesh had been the only attraction. As is so often the case with God’s own, there was supernaturally formulated “undercover” work going on in her.

Next we hear that she is on the auction block, as a slave, stripped naked and being sold to the highest bidder. In her wanderings, she must have somehow, probably through unpayable debt, become “owned” as a slave in order to have been dealt with in this manner. Apparently her earlier beauty that attracted her lovers had faded away and so she was no longer “marketable” as anything more than a common slave. However, this reveals something more. Even though Hosea’s love continued on, at some point during her unfaithfulness, he may have formally divorced her, as God had done to Israel.

Otherwise, had she not been divorced it seems as though a “clear title” to her, so that she could be sold, would have been difficult to obtain. Shouldn’t a right of first refusal” been afford to her husband prior to the auction if indeed there was a husband? In any event, given the rules regarding slavery, it is likely that as she could no longer earn enough at her trade, and in order to obtain the essentials, she would have gone into deep debt. Therefore, being unable to pay it off, her creditor placed her on slavery auction block in order to recover what she owed. The divorce idea is not my own conjecture. God actually did divorce His wife Israel (and Judea) as we learn in Jeremiah 3:8 The fact that God named one of the children “not my people” speaks of his no longer considering Israel as His wife, This indicates that Hosea had divorced Gomer. It therefore provides a more consistent component of this similitude that Hosea was living out.

Hosea learns of this auction, and proceeds to bid for her. It is here that we learn of his modest means because he only has 15 pieces of silver. To supplement this he added a homer and a half of barley, and that apparently was enough to purchase her. Whether this added up to the 30 pieces of silver, the normal price of a slave, we don’t know. However, it suggests to me that what he paid, was probably all he had, just as God, out of His love for us, gave His only Son to purchase us off our slavery block where we all, are due our sins. In the culture of that day, having purchased Gomer out of slavery, Hosea could have done with her or to her as he pleased. Instead, because of his undying love, he restored her to full status as his wife forever more, even as God will restore His wife Israel to her full status, as His eternal “wife.”

We are left with the impression that Gomer finally came to her senses, and repented of her earlier sin-filled ways, just as Israel will one day soon. If so, it was through Hosea's unconditional love for her and her understanding of the greatness of the God he so faithfully served. How many unbelieving spouses have been brought to salvation through similar patience, love and example, as Hosea provided to Gomer? Doesn't God also continue to do this as He grows the Body of Christ?

To me this is an even greater love story between a man and a woman than what He has given us in the Book of Ruth, between Ruth and Naomi, because it expresses a love tried over and over in an emotional hell. It was a genuine, all giving, and all forgiving, but unrequited, God-like love, an agape love that only God could have placed in Hosea's heart.

As we have seen, God selected Gomer to be a personification of Israel whom He considered to be His unfaithful wife. Thus He directed Hosea to live out his life in such a way as to show Israel the true nature of the condition and what her fate would be, absent an immediate repentance. Of course, He knew that she wouldn't repent and therefore this depiction of Israel in slavery was just what they were to expect. We may pity Gomer for her role and how history might view her as nothing more than an adulterous prostitute absent any redeeming qualities. However, I believe that we should withhold our pity as we examine her role and her fate more carefully.

When our Lord chose someone to be a type, He did so with utmost care, establishing parallels generally more numerous than can be found through mere superficial reading of the relevant events. Scholars claim that there are over 100 aspects of Joseph's life that cause him to be a type of Jesus. If you read my commentary on Isaac, perhaps you will find that God imparted many more instances of his being a type of Jesus than you may have previously discerned. I believe the same is true of Gomer as a type of Israel in her role as the unfaithful, but eventually repentant wife to God. With that in mind, let us see what more the Spirit is willing to reveal.

In the perverse idolatrous culture of the time, being a prostitute was not seen as a demeaning profession. Even after marrying Hosea and continuing her trade, now as both a fornicator and an adulteress, her reputation probably didn't noticeably suffer. We need only to look at our Hollywood influenced culture to see similar and even worse perversions of God's way as now being both common place and even highly celebrated.

For those who have ears to hear, it should be recognized that our current society is simply a magnified replay of Israel's condition in Hosea's day. Only a fool could believe that our unchanging and just God will much longer allow this to go on and not express His wrath on America as He did on Israel. I believe that this needs to be considered as the major purpose of this bit of Scripture. If it was only a warning to Israel alone, then it failed its purpose, for Israel did not repent. Look at the similar situation in Judah a hundred years later as Jeremiah prophesized in vain to that nation that should have learned from what happened to Hosea's northern kingdom. At that time, God told Jeremiah before he even started, that all of his preaching, teaching, prophecies and tears would do absolutely no good, that Judah would not hear him and would not repent. So it would have to suffer the consequences.

Has God's Words through Jeremiah, Hosea and others been heard by us, an even more perverse generation? Not so that you would notice, and therefore we should recognize that a similar, or worse fate is awaiting us as well. But what about Isaiah 55:11 where God said that His Word would not return to Him void. Haven't we seen here an exception to this statement? Not really. From the view point of nations this may seem to be the case, but not from the perspective of the individual. Sad as it is, the majority of mankind refuses to hear God much less obey Him. Yet as we see many times in Scripture, there is a remnant of saved souls in every generation and in nearly all, if not all segments of a society that do hear. God's Word does not come to them void, but returned to God fulfilled exactly as intended. It's simply the fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 20:16 where He tells us that many are called, but few are chosen. Even in Israel in that day there was a remnant that did understand what Hosea's God-directed charade

was meant to convey. A similar remnant that has accepted God's Word exists today that returns it not void, but filled with worship and prayers.

Hosea knew the significance of what He had been chosen to do. However, I doubt that it lessened the pain Gomer inflicted on him through her hardness and lack of any reciprocating love. Can we fashion our own minds so as to understand how this situation may have developed? We see that she was a prostitute before they were married, as was Israel before God's covenant of "marriage" was signified at Mt. Sinai. She probably chose that life because she loved pretty things, good times and lots of worldly stuff. Israel learned idol worship while in Egypt, and later from the Canaanites, where it seemed to well accommodate these people's spiritual requirements. Being a very attractive woman, it wasn't difficult for her to satisfy her covetous nature in exchange for her favors. Along came Hosea, an obviously virtuous man, probably of some means who fell in love with her and proposed marriage.

For His purpose, God caused His supernatural love to flow through Hosea to Gomer, perhaps soon after He directed him to marry. To Gomer, it probably was "why not". It would be easier to get her trinkets and stuff through a husband rather than by soliciting on street corners. This may have worked well for a while, until Hosea could no longer satisfy her desires. I picture a scene where she demanded something that Hosea could no longer provide because he has spent himself poor. As a virtuous godly man, he could not do wrong for the sake of satisfying her. So she left him and returned to her former method of being able to indulge herself. Can you not feel as I do the horrible emotional pain of his unrequited love made even worse by what she then resorted too?

With three children, perhaps one or more not even his, all abandoned by their mother, Hosea remained home adhering to his fatherly responsibilities, earning an honest living and serving God. This appears to have gone on for years until the auction block event. In the interim, her fast life had probably aged her beyond her years, while Hosea's God-given love for her never diminished, but continued in hope and prayer for her return. That hope and his prayers were finally rewarded when he was able to purchase her, bring

her home and restore her as his wife, a role, which by then she was glad to accept and live out faithfully for the rest of her life.

Was it gladly, or was she simply resigned to this as her only option? I have no doubt that before long it became gladness. Her heart eventually became contrite, humbled and repentant. Perhaps for the first time, it became filled with gratitude and genuine love. I believe that through an ensuing faith, through the loving tutelage of Hosea, righteousness was imparted to her, (Romans 4:11) and that today her spirit is in heaven even as is Hosea's. After what Scripture tells us about Gomer, how can I possibly embrace such a belief? To me, it's right there in Scripture if we accept that God chose her to be a type of Israel, which of course He did. What was the fate of Israel? After a life of unfaithfulness to her Husband-Father God, she was severely punished, but eventually restored to her home. Israel now has returned to the holy land home God provided for her. No doubt Gomer was not yet redeemed when she returned to her home just as Israel today is not a believing people. I believe that eventually Gomer, saw the light, begged for forgiveness and was redeemed, just as Scripture assures us that Israel will. Jesus tells us this will happen "when they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." (Zachariah 12:10)

I suspect that Gomer saw Hosea in a similar light. Many prophecies, especially Daniels, and also in the Book of Romans, as well as the Book of Revelation, show us how Israel will be fully restored as God's saved and rewarded people. God made Gomer a type of Israel, and that "type" would be severely lacking in consistency and relevance were she to be dropped from continuing in that role before the whole of this similitude had been played out to the end. The Book of Hosea should be "must studying" for anyone who wants to learn much about what Scripture is telling us about us. Some expositors believe, and I agree, that this Book depicts our current condition better than any other part of Scripture. The little enactment by Hosea and Gomer is but a small part of that message from which we have much to learn.

The similarities between the condition of Israel at the time, and ours today, are most striking. As Dr. Missler has observed, "it was the best of times and the worst of times."

These are the opening words of Charles Dickens “The Tale of Two Cities.” Under Jeroboam they had recovered all the territory previously lost. They even controlled Damascus. They were at the height of prosperity and power. Isn’t this where we are, or seem to have been for some time, at least until 2008? So from their perspective, they were doing great. It was the best of times. However, from God’s perspective, it was the worst of times, because they had sunk to the lowest level of moral and spiritual depravity.

Recognize the closeness of the parallel? Jesus in fact reiterates this message in Revelation 3 regarding this present day church period in His letter to Laodicea. Here also is the best of times and worst of times theme being expressed. Notice however, in Revelation He is speaking not to Israel, but to the church, the “Christian” church that claims to be His people, but who have the same malady as did Israel. Are we, or will we, listen and learn from this message anymore than did Israel regarding Hosea’ message? Never, not at all, because as noted above, it is far too late. For we are no longer a Christian nation in any real sense, anymore than Israel was a God centered nation. Has God change or mellowed so that we may escape His judgment? Our eternal unchanging God has not changed and His judgment will be done! Count on it! The storm clouds of His judgment are already visible on the horizon and moving rapidly. Is there anyone taking this seriously, or is this merely just another “tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing”? (Shakespeare’s, Hamlet)