

Ezekiel symbolizes the union of all God's people under the leadership of one shepherd, David (the Messiah) in Ezekiel 34:1-24. Ezekiel symbolizes the same Messianic union by the two "staffs" in Ezekiel 37:15-28, (cf. also Jer. 3:15-18; Isa. 11:12-13). This, of course, finds its fulfillment in such N.T. scriptures as Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:4-11; etc.

The name Jezreel loses its stigma. Henceforth it will be great. Jezreel means, as we have pointed out before, "sowing." There, in 1:4 it meant God would disperse them in judgment. Here in 1:11 it is used in an exactly opposite way to mean that God will, out of the wreckage of former Israel, make a new sowing or planting and raise up a New Israel.

## QUIZ

1. How do these two verses fit into our principle of interpretation called "Covenant Background."
2. Where in the New Testament do we have an inspired interpretation of the fulfillment of these two verses?
3. How can the Gentiles be included in the fulfillment of these verses?
4. What other O.T. scriptures refer to the union of Israel and Judah in a Messianic sense?
5. What does the name Jezreel signify used in this context as compared to Hosea 1:4?

## ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE— SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY

TEXT: 2:1-5

- 1 Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.
- 2 Contend with your mother, contend; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; and let her put away her whoredoms from her face, and her adulteries from between her breasts;
- 3 lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.
- 4 Yea, upon her children will I have no mercy; for they are children of whoredom;
- 5 for their mother hath played the harlot; she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

## QUERIES

- a. What is the meaning of "Ammi" and "Ruhamah?"
- b. How were her children, "the children of whoredom?"
- c. Who were her "lovers"?

## PARAPHRASE

Oh Jezreel, rename your brother and sister. Call your brother *Now You Are Mine* (Ammi); name your sister *Beloved* (Ruhamah), for now God will have mercy upon her. Plead with your mother (Israel); for she has committed spiritual adultery and married another; I am no longer her husband; she is no longer my wife. Reason with her to stop her spiritual adultery, to quit giving herself to other gods. If she doesn't, I will strip her naked of all that she calls her own; everything will be taken from her and she will be like she was when she was first born as a nation in Egypt; I will also make her desolate like a wilderness, arid like a dry land, and she will die because I shall withhold the life-giving water. Furthermore, I will take away the special favors from the people of Israel for in worshiping idols they show that they are her children. Israel, their mother, has committed spiritual adultery. She did a shameful thing when she said, I am determined to go and join myself to and consort with other gods for they are the ones who supply me with things I enjoy.

## SUMMARY

Israel's apostasy is portrayed here under the figure of a wife leaving her husband for paramours. The Prophet pleads with the people to reason with one another and repent of the spirit of religious harlotry (idolatry) in their hearts.

## COMMENT

v. 1 SAY . . . UNTO YOUR BRETHREN, AMMI; AND TO YOUR SISTERS, RUHAMAH. The Hebrew text of the O.T. makes 1:10-11 to become 2:1-2 and thus as we have it here in the English version would be 2:3 of the Hebrew text. This preserves the continuity of context and is to be preferred above our present English version. In other words 2:1 as we have it in the English version, belongs contextually to 1:10-11. Our present 2:2 begins another context and so the division in the English version leaves much to be desired. The English version has followed the arrangement of the Septuagint (LXX) and the Latin Vulgate in dividing the context as it has.

*Ammi*, means "My people." *Rubamah*, means "Pited or Beloved." The victory which is accomplished (1:10-11) at the fulfillment of the covenant and when *all* Israel (spiritual Israel) is gathered together under one head will so change man's relationship to God and God's relationship to man that redeemed man would thereafter be called "God's people," and God would thereafter "have pity upon them." So this is the conclusion of that which would be accomplished according to 1:10-11 and rightfully belongs to that context.

v. 2-3 CONTEND WITH YOUR MOTHER . . . LET HER PUT AWAY HER WHOREDOMS . . . LEST I STRIP HER NAKED . . . The word *contend* would be better translated, *reason, persuade, plead* or *beg*. The "mother" is Israel the nation. The children are the individual Israelites. This is simply a rhetorical mode of expression. Although the nation, regarded as a whole, had fallen into idolatry, a very few faithful formed a remnant and to these the Prophet pleads. They are the last hope for the nation. They must persuade the nation to "put away its whoredoms."

"Whoredom" here probably refers to the idolatry practiced by the nation. Israel had entered into the covenant with Jehovah its God; Israel had joined itself to God as a woman joins herself to a husband. When it went after other gods its idolatry became a breach of the faithfulness which it owed to its God. Its idolatry was even more deplorable than that of the heathen for the idolatry of Israel constituted rebellion and ingratitude against greater privilege, more blessed circumstances, and greater revelation. Idolatry is referred to as "whoredom" (cf. Ex. 34:14-15; Lev. 17:7; 20:5-6; Num. 14:33; 15:39; Deut. 31:16; 32:16, 21).

Actually, this section (2:2-5) would better fit our outline under I. B. 2., "Israel's Ingratitude, Love of Sin." But that would place it out of its textual order and since we wish to deal with the text in the order it is given, the outline must become secondary.

The "face" can mirror or display either modesty or immodesty, shamelessness or shame (cf. Jer. 6:15; 8:6; 9:21). It was customary even in that day for the harlot to "paint" her face with cosmetics to attract and allure lovers. Nationally speaking, Israel was in some way displaying outwardly the face of a spiritual harlot. The harlot also adorned and exposed her breasts in order to allure. We have here a synonymous parallelism; an exhortation that Israel should correct the outward display of idolatrous practices for they exhibit the spirit of harlotry and rebellion that is within her national heart.

Israel is warned that if she continues in idolatry, God will "strip her naked . . . like she was the day she was born." When Israel was "born" as a nation, she came from a disorganized, penniless, mass of slaves then serving the Egyptian pharaoh. She had no worldly goods, no worldly position or nationhood and no land she could call her own, (cf. Ezek. 16). God took her from Egypt, gave her a land, blessed her with material abundance, gave her national prominence and influence. But now that she has been unfaithful, God is going to "disinherit" her and cast her off and take away from her all that He has given. She will once again become the slave of a foreign nation; once again she will be without nationality and without material abundance. Israel as a nation will *be like* a land that has become arid, desolate. As a nation she will become worthless, cease to produce and die.

v. 4-5 . . . UPON HER CHILDREN WILL I HAVE NO MERCY . . . THEIR MOTHER HATH PLAYED THE HARLOT . . . SHE SAID, I WILL GO AFTER MY LOVERS, THAT GIVE ME MY BREAD . . . We like the statement of K & D, "The fact that the children are specially mentioned after and along with the mother, when in reality mother and children are one, serves to give greater keenness to the threat, and guards against that carnal security, in which individuals imagine that, inasmuch as they are free from the sin and guilt of the nation as a whole, they will also be exempted from the threatened punishment." The nation and its leadership (civil and religious) played the harlot by becoming idolaters and they led the people into the same sin. The "children" were not forced into "whoredom." They "loved to have it so," and willingly followed the leading of the nation.

The "mother," however proud and vain she might represent herself, did a shameful thing when she was unfaithful to her God. "I will go after" could be literally translated, "Let me go," or, "I would go after." She does not wait to be enticed or allured or seduced. She brazenly goes, uninvited, unsought and contrary to the instinctive feelings of woman, after those who make no overtures to draw her and away from her Husband (God) who has loved her and beckoned her. Enviously she regarded the surrounding nations (Phoenicia, Egypt, Assyria) who did not worship Jehovah, yet possessed far greater political power and prestige, worldwide commerce, huge riches, marvelous luxuries, and far greater freedom from moral restraints than God's people. The spirit of worldliness made Israel think of her God as a cruel and unloving taskmaster and of His law as an unbearable yoke. She began to worship idols. Then as her prosperity and

political prestige grew she rationalized that "her lovers" had supplied all these things she so greedily wanted. In the days of Jeroboam II idolatrous Israel suddenly gained power and riches rivaling those of David and Solomon. It seemed that idolatry paid better wages than service to Jehovah. God had warned them against such pride and ingratitude and idolatry in plain words (Deut. 8:1ff). It is interesting to note that the people of Judah said the same thing of their idols (Jeremiah 44:15-18); they attributed their prosperity to the heathen gods they worshipped rather than Jehovah. It is frighteningly true that people in so-called "Christian" America (and other "Christianized" nations) have not learned much from Israel and Judah. A great number of people today attribute the material and political affluence and prestige to their idols of science, man, sex or some other philosophy. This is just as brazen and shameful and just as much spiritual whoredom as Baalism was in the days of Hosea. Let us take the exhortation of Hosea to heart and "plead with our mother" that she "put away her whoredom from her face."

### QUIZ

1. What is the proper division of chapters 1 and 2? Where should 2:1 go?
2. Who is the "mother" and who are the "children"? What literary form is being used here?
3. What is the "whoredom" of which both "mother" and children are guilty?
4. How will God "strip" Israel naked?
5. What makes Israel's going after other gods so shameful?
6. Why did Israel think her heathen gods supplied the things she wanted?
7. How do nations act the same way today as Israel acted then?

### ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE— SPURIOUS LOVERS

TEXT: 2:6-8

- 6 Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns and I will build a wall against her, that she shall not find her paths.
- 7 And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

- 8 For she did not know that I gave her the grain, and the new wine and the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.

### QUERIES

- a. Of whom is the prophet speaking in this context?
- b. Why did "she" not find the lovers "she" was seeking?
- c. Why did "she" now know the person supplying her grain and wine?

### PARAPHRASE

So, because Israel insists on playing the harlot I am going to put an obstacle in her way to finding her lovers. She will pursue her false gods but she will not catch up with them; and she will search for them but she will not find them: then, having realized they are impotent and spurious lovers, she will have learned her lesson and say, Oh, it was so much better for me when I was with my first husband—I will humble myself and return to Him, seeking His forgiveness. She became a harlot because she allowed herself to forget that I gave her the food, clothing and enjoyments of life; she allowed these gifts of Mine to be employed in worshipping Baal.

### SUMMARY

God is going to make Israel realize the impotency and spurious nature of its false lovers, their idols.

### COMMENT

v. 6 . . . I WILL HEDGE UP THY WAYS . . . AND . . . BUILD A WALL AGAINST HER . . . Is the prophet speaking of Gomer or Israel here? We believe the context insists upon Israel being the object of this warning. It is possible that Hosea took a similar action toward Gomer in an attempt to reclaim her before she sold herself completely into slavery (cf. ch. 3). However, the primary object of this prediction is Israel. God is going to place such an insuperable obstacle between Israel and continued idol-worship that she will not be able to find any way to worship idols again. The path leading to idol worship was going to be blocked with a solid wall of resistance. The "hedge of thorns" probably refers to the intense suffering they endured in the captivities. This was a lesson they never forgot. The Jews never again worshipped idols! Over and over again Ezekiel

repeats the phrase "Then will you know that I am Jehovah . . ." referring to the lessons they would learn from the sufferings of their captivity.

v. 7 . . . SHE SHALL FOLLOW AFTER HER LOVERS, BUT SHE SHALL NOT OVERTAKE THEM . . . THEN SHALL SHE SAY, I WILL GO ANE RETURN TO MY FIRST HUSBAND . . . At first, when they are in distress and tribulation at the judgment of God in the siege and captivity they will search with zeal for some comforting oracle or action from their "lovers"—the false gods. But they shall not even find their idols for the king of Assyria will come and take their idols away and then Israel will realize that there is no deliverance or comfort to be found in these false gods. She will wake up to the utter nothingness of idols. Although Israel was taken into the midst of an idolatrous empire (Assyria), and there had even more opportunity to practice idolatry, it learned the worthlessness of all trust in idols quickly and was thus impelled to turn to the Lord God Jehovah, her first Husband, in faith and repentance, seeking His mercy. While in her captivity she came to herself and saw the shame of her former religious promiscuity. She said, like the prodigal in Jesus' parable, "I will return." This is the purpose in all of God's "hedges of thorns" and His "walls"—to bring us to say, "I will return."

Augustine wrote, "I escaped not Thy scourges, for what mortal can? For Thou wert ever with me, mercifully rigorous, and besprinkling with most bitter alloy all my unlawful pleasures, that I might seek pleasure without alloy. But where to find such, I could not discover, save in Thee, O Lord, Who teachest by sorrow, and woundest us, to heal, and killest us, lest we die from Thee." This is somewhat the same as Paul wrote in II Cor. 1:3-10 and II Cor. 12:7-10; Hebrews 10:32-39; 12:1-11. This was the experience of Job and countless others whom the Lord loved enough to chasten. The Lord loved Israel "with an everlasting love" and so he chastened them. The moment of crisis was when they decided, "I will return."

v. 8 . . . SHE DID NOT KNOW THAT I GAVE HER THE GRAIN . . . WHICH THEY USED FOR BAAL. Israel should have known the source of her blessings for the law of Moses in all its institutions of sacrifices and offerings and its precepts was intended to remain them. However, the law, the word of the Lord had been forgotten. Israel's ignorance was wilfull and culpable (cf. Amos. 7:10-16; Hosea

4:1-6, 5:4; Micah 2:6-11; Jer. 6:10, 14, 16-19). She deliberately ignored the word of God and used what God provided to worship and perpetuate the religion of Baal. But her captivity restored her to sanity. She was taught again Whom she was dependent upon for life.

Baal worship was brought into Israel by Jezebel, daughter of a king of Sidon. Jehu destroyed it for a time, because its adherents were followers of the house of Ahab. The worship was cruel, like that of Moloch, immoral and abominable. It advocated (at least by Jezebel) the extermination of worship of Jehovah and its most zealous adherents caused many of the prophets of God to be slain. To such an abominable curse the people of Israel attributed the blessings which only Jehovah could give the people.

### QUIZ

1. What is probably meant by the "hedge of thorns" and the "wall?"
2. What is meant by "not finding her lovers?"
3. What is the significance of the phrase "I will return?"
4. Why did Paul say he was chastened or afflicted?
5. Why did Israel not know where her material blessings originated?
6. What is Baal worship?

## ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE— SHAME REVEALED

TEXT: 2:9-13

- 9 Therefore will I take back my grain in the time thereof, and my new wine in the season thereof, and will pluck away my wool and my flax which should have covered her nakedness.
- 10 And now will I uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of my hand.
- 11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies.
- 12 And I will lay waste her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she hath said, These are my hire that my lovers have given me; and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.
- 13 And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim, unto which she burned incense, when she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith Jehovah.

## QUERIES

- a. How will Jehovah "uncover" the lewdness of Israel?
- b. How would Israel's vines and fig-trees become a "forest"?
- c. Who is the "Baalim"?

## PARAPHRASE

And so, because Israel refused to acknowledge Me as Giver of all her abundance, I will more clearly manifest Myself as Giver by taking away my grain and my wool and my flax just at the time when men feel quite sure of harvesting it. This abundance which I gave her is the only thing that kept her from utter destitution and complete barness. Now when I take away the veneer of material prosperity I will expose her to disgrace, miserableness and shame before her idol-paramours and none of her idols shall deliver her from this disgrace which I bring upon her. I, Jehovah, will stop all the feasts, holy seasons and sabbaths from which she gets such joy and festiveness. I will take all her vines and fig-trees, from which she gets her delicacies, which she says are blessings gained from worshipping idols, and unattended and uncultivated they shall become like forests where the beasts of the field roam and graze. Inasmuch as she claimed to be wise she became a fool and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles, therefore I will give her up in the lusts of her heart to the consequences of the life of sin she has lived in worshipping and serving the Baals. She dressed and groomed herself immodestly and consorted promiscuously with these idols and spurned My love.

## SUMMARY

Because Israel has not regarded the material blessings she received as gifts of Jehovah God, and has not used them for His glory, Jehovah will take them away and her folly in worshipping idols will be exposed; she will be disgraced before her false gods.

## COMMENT

v. 9 THEREFORE WILL I TAKE BACK MY GRAIN IN THE TIME THEREOF . . . Just at the time when they would expect to normally reap the regular harvest of grain, wool and flex, God would take it away. At this time the absence of the crops would be all the more significant and striking and thus more clearly the work of Jehovah. K & D say, "If God suddenly takes away the gifts then,

not only is the loss more painfully felt, but regarded as a punishment far more than when they have been prepared beforehand for a bad harvest by the failure of the crop." Since they did not acknowledge Him as Giver when He gave these crops, He will manifest Himself more clearly as such in taking them away! Their material prosperity was a thin veneer covering up the shame and disgrace in which the nation was actually engaged at this time. Take away the material prosperity and what is left—nothing but decadence, weakness, folly. There is no moral fibre in the nation; there is no truth or justice. So, when God takes away the outward appearance of well-being which covers her nakedness, her shame will be exposed.

v. 10 . . . I WILL UNCOVER HER LEWDNESS IN THE SIGHT OF HER LOVERS . . . The hypocrisy, weakness, decadence will be fully exposed even to her "lovers." The word translated "lewdness" means literally, *wicked folly or sexual depravity*. As soon as God strips the veil of prosperity off their sin, and her folly is apparent, even her "lovers" will despise her. Her "lovers" are the heathen gods (idols) she worshipped. We wonder why Hosea personifies an idol as a "lover." An idol may be loved, but does an idol love? If not, to what purpose is the uncovering of Israel's lewdness in the sight of her lovers? Could it be that Israel's folly or lewdness will be exposed to the demon-spirits who are persons associated with idols (cf. I Cor. 10:18-22)? When one worships an idol there is more involved than doing obedience to a piece of wood or stone! Idol worship (it makes no difference what the idol may be; whether an object or a philosophy), involves worshipping the "god of this world," Satan and his demonic hosts! Yes, Israel, stripped of her false power and wealth, brought low, will be despised even by the Devil and his demons whom they formerly worshipped and trusted! Some commentators believe her "lovers" to be heathen nations with whom she made alliances (esp. Assyria).

v. 11 I WILL ALSO CAUSE ALL HER MIRTH TO CEASE, HER FEASTS . . . NEW MOONS . . . SABBATHS . . . SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES. It appears that even though Israel worshipped idols she still retained the outward formalities of Jehovistic worship such as feasts, new moons and sabbaths. Even while disobeying God they kept enough of the outward forms to soothe their consciences. Evidently they regarded these days and kept them in a very festive, merry-making, mood. God will cause all this revelry and merry-making to cease. There will be no more such gatherings for sensual indulgence.

v. 12 . . . I WILL LAY WASTE HER VINES AND FIG-TREES . . . AND . . . MAKE THEM A FOREST . . . The vine and the fig-tree are the finest productions of Canaan and afford the choicest delicacies (cf. Joel 1:7-12). Israel's paths to superficial pleasure must be barricaded; her diversionary interests must be obscured; the objects of her indulgences must be removed. Her own stupidity will mock her in her remorse. That which she said were payments from her idols for the worship and adoration she accorded them, God would make desolate and ruined. Her vineyards and fig-tree orchards would be left unattended after the captivity and become overgrown with brush and weeds like a forest and the beasts of the field would tramp through them grazing.

v. 13 AND I WILL VISIT UPON HER THE DAYS OF THE BAALIM, UNTO WHICH SHE BURNED INCENSE . . . *Baalim* is the plural of *Baal*. There were many Baals; Baal-berith, Lord of covenants or oaths; Baal-zebub, Lord of flies; Baal-Peor, Lord of sin. In our *Paraphrase* we used phrasing from the first chapter of Romans because we feel this is what Hosea means. The Israelites had so joined themselves to these idols, they became like them. Hosea specifically says so in 9:10, "But they came to Baal-peor and consecrated themselves to Baal, and became detestable like the thing they loved." When man, by the exercise of his own free will, refuses to have God in his knowledge and exchanges the truth of God for a lie and worships the creature rather than the Creator, God can do nothing else but give man up to serve these evil passions and natures. Paul wrote that when men *take pleasure* in unrighteousness and *have no love* for the truth, God sends them a strong delusion, that they may believe a lie, if that is what they want (II Thess. 2:10-12). The very evil, wickedness, depravity and foolishness which was represented by the Baalim they worshipped would be visited upon them in all its foulness and ugliness and self-destructiveness! Such was the actual case of both Israel (in 721 B.C.) and Judah (in 586 B.C.). Anarchy, treason, murder, theft, crimes of sexual passion were rampant in the last days of these two nations (and in many nations since). If a nation or a people sows the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind! If a nation plays with fire it will get burned! In Jeremiah's day society was so corrupt one could not trust his neighbor, his brother, not even those of his own household (cf. Jer. 9:36-; 20:10). Let every nation and every individual beware of the vicious circle of ignorance of God which leads to sin and depravity which in turn leads to deeper darkness and ignorance and then to deeper sin! Only if we fellowship (share)

with God and the Light which He alone gives may we be freed from falsehood and sin (cf. John 8:12-38; I John 1:5-10; 2:1-11).

### QUIZ

1. What bearing would the time of God's withdrawal of crops have on Israel?
2. Who were the "lovers" of Israel?
3. What connection does Israel's "mirth" have to her "feasts," "sabbaths"?
4. How important were vines and fig-trees to Israel?
5. In what way did God visit upon Israel "the days of the Baalim?"

### LOVE RECONCILING— ISRAEL IS LURED

TEXT: 2:14-15

- 14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.
- 15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall make answer there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

### QUERIES

- a. Where is the "wilderness" where God will bring Israel?
- b. Where is the valley of "Achor"?

### PARAPHRASE

Because I am the faithful Covenant God who never retracts His promise, and because you have forgotten Me, I am going to make love to you again and woo you by speaking words to your heart when you are in your despondency in captivity. Out of her deprivation shall come again to her prosperity; out of her tribulation and trouble shall be opened to her a door of hope. And she shall compose and sing her songs of faith in answer to My Love as she did in her early days of deliverance from Egypt.

### SUMMARY

God will use the judgment which Israel brought upon herself to woo her back to Him. Out of her tribulation will come an open door to hope.

## COMMENT

v. 14-15 . . . I WILL ALLURE HER . . . GIVE HER . . . VINEYARDS . . . AND THE VALLEY OF ACHOR FOR A DOOR OF HOPE; AND SHE SHALL MAKE ANSWER THERE . . . "Therefore" points back to v. 13. Not only in spite of, but because Israel forgot God and went "a whoring" after other gods, Jehovah-God initiates action designed to allure or "woo" Israel back to Him. "Love divine, all love excelling . . ." "Oh, what mercy, and what grace!" Israel had played the fool. Headlong she had plunged into idolatry which was the path of self-destruction. Headstrong and stiff-necked she rejected Jehovah and delighted in perverting His Law and blasphemously keeping His feasts and sabbaths. And *because of this* God loved her! We are reminded of the song:

"The love of God is greater far  
 Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
 It goes beyond the highest star,  
 And reaches to the lowest hell . . .  
 "Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
 And were the skies of parchment made;  
 Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill,  
 And ev'ry man a scribe by trade;  
 To write the love of God above  
 Would drain the ocean dry;  
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
 Tho' stretched from sky to sky.

by F. M. Lehman

It also reminds us of Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heaven." This beautiful poem about the ever-seeking love of God is reproduced at the conclusion of this book. Please read it and re-read it until you feel it.

The phrase, ". . . the valley of Achor for a door of hope" is an interesting figure of speech. Two ideas are placed in close connection and declared to be inter-related—Troubling and Hope. God would have Israel understand that her "troubling" in captivity is the reason she may have "hope." In Joshua 7:26 we find the valley named "Trouble" because of the terrible and swift judgment of God which fell upon Achan, the man who "troubled" Israel because of his secret sin. It was only when Joshua dealt with this trouble that hope and victory returned to Israel.

Many are the New Testament passages which teach us to understand that our "tribulation" gives us reason to "hope." In Hebrews 10:32-39

we are told that our tribulation builds confidence; we have need of endurance so that we may do the will of God and receive what is promised. In Hebrews 12:3-11 we are told that only through chastening may we have hope that God loves us as sons. If God did not chasten us and trouble us what would happen to us? We would be left to our own self-destruction and most certainly destroy ourselves! Paul relates in II Cor. 1:3-11 that he was brought to despair of life itself in tribulation in order that he should be brought to rely not on himself but upon God! Read Paul's revelation in II Cor. 12:7-10 in this connection also.

These two verses use the history of Israel's deliverance from Egypt to typify God's future deliveries of His New Covenant people through Christ, the Messiah. Just as the wilderness wanderings of Israel in the days of Moses were days of probation and trial wherein God was training a people by want and privation to the knowledge of its need of Divine help, and on the other hand by miraculous deliverance in the time of need to trust to His omnipotence, so the entire time from the captivities (of both Israel and Judah), through the restoration, culminating in the coming of the Messiah would be a time when God would "allure" a *New Israel*. God would test and try this New Israel and speak "comfortably" to her through her prophets of the exile; through the post exilic prophets; through His acts of redemption and material blessing and finally through the coming of the Messiah. This would be the "return of her vineyards from thence."

The valley of Achor is a type showing how God restores His favor to His people after the expiation of guilt by the punishment of the transgressor. God will so expiate the sins of man, and cover them with His grace by punishing them in Christ (cf. Isa. 53), that the covenant of fellowship with Him will no more be broken by transgression—victory for His people will be assured. The *New Israel* (the church of Christ) will then "answer" the Lord in praise and promise by keeping the *new* covenant just as Israel did in the days of her youth at Sinai (cf. Ex. 15; Ex. 24).

## QUIZ

1. What did the bringing of Israel into the wilderness have to do with alluring her back to God?
2. How did God speak "comfortably" to Israel?
3. What does the name "Achor" mean and how could it become a door of hope?
4. In what way did Israel "make answer . . . as in the days of her youth . . ." ?

## LOVE RECONCILING— ISRAEL IS LAVED

TEXT: 2:16-20

- 16 And it shall be at that day, saith Jehovah, that thou shalt call me Ishi (That is, My husband), and shalt call me no more Baali (that is, My master).
- 17 For I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be mentioned by their name.
- 18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of the heavens, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will make them to lie down safely.
- 19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betho thee unto me in righteousness, and in justice, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.
- 20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know Jehovah.

### QUERIES

- a. What "day" is Hosea speaking of in verse 16?
- b. Why make a covenant for Israel with the beasts?
- c. When did Jehovah betroth Israel to Himself in righteousness?

### PARAPHRASE

And when that day comes, the day when Achor becomes a door of hope, you, Israel, will have become a chastened wife and you will return to Me and dwell with Me and I shall become your Husband, saith Jehovah. You shall no longer be in bondage to your idol-masters, because I will have delivered you from all association with the Baalim. And when this is accomplished, I will remove the curse I put upon all creation in the beginning because of man's sin; I will conquer all the enemies of My people and they shall have peace and safety. At this time I will make a new marriage covenant with a new people. The character of this new relationship will be righteousness, justice, loving-kindness and abundant mercy. I will display My everlasting faithfulness in this new relationship, and My new people will know Me, each one, personally, and in a new, tender, experiential way!

## SUMMARY

This is the "shortened perspective" again. From the "allurement" in the former section which refers to the captivity and return, we come in this section to the new relationship established by the Messiah.

## COMMENT

v. 16-17 . . . THOU SHALT CALL ME ISHI . . . I WILL TAKE AWAY THE NAMES OF THE BAALIM . . . The phrase, "at that day," refers back to the former section—the "day" when "the valley of Achor would become a door of hope." When the Suffering Servant of Jehovah came and was punished for our transgressions, His troubling became the door of hope for all mankind; "that day" refers to the coming of the Messiah. At that time the Israel which has been purged of idolatry by its captivities and "allured" through all its testing and blessing (culminating in the One in whom we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places) will turn to Jehovah-God in a new relationship of Husband. The church calls God Husband when she stands in right relation to Him. On the other hand people call God Baal when they place the true God on the level of the Baals and worship other gods along with Jehovah, or obliterate the absolute distinction between Jehovah and the Baals. The new life in righteousness which is to belong to this *new* Israel (cf. v. 19-20 and Zech. 13:2ff) is depicted as the extermination of idols because idolatry was the principle form in which ungodliness manifested itself in Israel.

v. 18 AND IN THAT DAY WILL I MAKE A COVENANT FOR THEM WITH THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD . . . AND WILL MAKE THEM TO LIE DOWN SAFELY. "That day" refers again to the day when God will climax His redemptive labors in Christ—the "day" when He will fulfill the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel), swearing, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That covenant of redemption for fallen man was uttered first in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15), just prior to the pronouncement of God's curse upon man and upon the earth for man's sake. In his innocence man was given dominion over all the earth and over all the creatures of God's creation. But that dominion was taken from man when he fell in sin. Jesus removed the curse that was pronounced upon man (Gal. 3:10-14) and has *potentially* (though not yet in reality) restored man to his God-given dominion (Heb. 2:5-18). Jesus did this by becoming Man and living a sinless life in the flesh, condemning sin in the flesh, winning for man the victory and dominion man had previously lost by surrender-

ing to sin in the flesh. God, through Christ, made peace between Himself and man. Man is no longer at enmity against God or the law of God if he is *in Christ*. Man need no longer fear any enemy if he is in Christ. He is more than conqueror through Christ who loved him. Christ has despoiled the principalities and powers triumphing over them. He has delivered man from the bondage of the devil. What glory it will be when it is all consummated in the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

This figure of speech (taming of the wild beasts and causing war to cease) is a favorite way of the prophets in describing the peace, security and harmony of the coming Messianic kingdom (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; 9:1-7; 11:1-10; 35:8-10; Ezek. 34:20-31; Micah 4:1-4; Zech. 9:9-10). The Christian *now* enjoys a peace, security and harmony with God and His purposes which is incomprehensible to the sinner ("the peace which passeth understanding") and will, in the future, realize it in all its realness and eternity.

v. 19-20 AND I WILL BETROTH THEE UNTO ME FOR EVER . . . IN RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . IN JUSTICE . . . IN LOVINGKINDNESS . . . IN MERCIES . . . IN FAITHFULNESS . . . AND THOU SHALT KNOW JEHOVAH. This describes the work of God as He redeems His wife (the covenant people) and changes her into a *new* woman! Indeed, Ezekiel speaks of the fact that the covenant nation will be given a new heart and a new spirit and resurrected, as it were, from the dead, a new people (Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:25-26; 37:1ff). The new covenant people would be cleansed from all impurity (cf. Zech. 13:1). The mercy of the Lord will be so all-encompassing it will not only forgive, it will forget (cf. Micah 7:18-20; Isa. 1:18-20) our transgressions. When God performs this work of regeneration in those who will permit Him to do so, those who are "betrothed" to Him *know* Him in the fullest sense of the word! Righteousness, justice, lovingkindness and mercy describe the results of God's transforming work in the *new* Israel; faithfulness of God is the method of bringing it about. God will demonstrate His faithfulness in sending Christ, the Messiah. He will demonstrate His trustworthiness in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the establishment of the church through sending the Holy Spirit. So, through the preaching of the gospel (the good news) of God's faithfulness demonstrated in history through Christ, men will be "betrothed" to God forever. Men will know God and be known of Him. Men will know that God is love; that God is truth; that God is above all and in all. Men will know God as Father and Divine Friend. Read the writings of John, the apostle, for a glorious revelation on the knowledge of

God. It is through this renewed knowledge of God that we are able to fellowship (share) in His divine nature (cf. II Pet. 1:3-11; I Jn. 1:1-4).

### QUIZ

1. What "day" is Hosea referring to here in this section?
2. How did God "make a covenant with the beasts"? Cite other scriptures.
3. What did God promise to do for His *new* Israel? How did He do it?
4. To what extent is the knowledge of God promised here?

## LOVE RECONCILING— ISRAEL IS LOVED

TEXT: 2:21-23

- 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, saith Jehovah, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth;
- 22 and the earth shall answer the grain, and the new wine, and the oil; and they shall answer Jezreel.
- 23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth: and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

### QUERIES

- a. What is the point in giving answer to "Jezreel"?
- b. How is God going to "sow" her in the earth?

### PARAPHRASE

And on that day when I make a new people, says Jehovah, I will hear. Yes, I will hear the heavens as they pray to Me to allow them to supply the earth with fertility. The heavens will, in turn, hear the supplications of the earth and supply what the earth asks for. The earth will hear the needs of the grain and the vine and the olive tree and supply them with sustenance. The crops of the earth will hear the supplications of the changed Jezreel, and give to her in abundance. At that same time I will take the Israel I "scattered" and "gently sow" a new seed for a harvest of My own. I will pity those who are Not Pitied, and I will call those who are not My people, Now You are My People. They will respond and say, You are our God!

## SUMMARY

In highly figurative language the prophet now describes the overflowing love which Jehovah promises to shower down upon the *new* Israel

## COMMENT

v. 21-22 . . . IN THAT DAY, I WILL ANSWER, SAITH JEHOVAH . . . AND THEY SHALL ANSWER JEZREEL. The phrase "in that day," refers to the same time as the preceding section—which is the Messianic age. This is plainly evident from I Peter 2:10 where the apostle quotes Hosea 2:23 as being fulfilled in the establishment of the church and calling of men and women to become a "royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people . . ." There is *double* apostolic confirmation of this section in Hosea being a Messianic prophecy. The apostle Paul says (Romans 9:19-26) that Hosea 2:23 is a prophecy of the receiving of the Gentiles into the scheme of God's redemption through their faith in Christ.

The word "answer" should be translated "hear." Hosea uses highly figurative language here to depict the shower of blessings upon this new betrothal of God to new Israel. The betrothal having been completed (in Christ, Eph. 5), the prophet now represents heaven and earth standing nearby ready to serve the Bridegroom as He showers His bride with presents. The heavens and the earth are represented as earnestly asking the Husband (God) which presents are to be showered upon the Bride. The Husband *bears* and directs that all the riches of His domain be given Her. So the church is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). K & D say, ". . . the prophet represents the heaven as praying to God, to allow it to give the earth that which is requisite to ensure its fertility; Whereupon the heaven fulfills the desires of the earth, and the earth yields its produce to the nation . . . all things in heaven and on earth depend on God . . . without His bidding not a drop of rain falls from heaven, and consequently all nature would . . . be barren, unless He gave it fertility by His blessing."

The name *Jezreel* (formerly used figuratively to predict God's "scattering" of Israel in the captivity—in the sense of judgment) is now used in the good sense to denote a *new* sowing. This is evident from the context and the following verse (v. 23). So the figure represents God, the Husband, showering down gifts upon His Bride, the Church, through the agency of His whole creation. The reader should read in connection with this Ephesians 1:3-23 and Colossians 1:9-29.

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.