

# 1 | HOSEA 1

## THE PROPHET AND THE PROSTITUTE

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### *Introduction*

Open your Bible if you will to Hosea 1. The title of our message is “The Prophet and the Prostitute.”

## **PLACE OF REFUGE**

Do you remember when you were a child? When children are small they run to their mother's arms. We have little children all around here. Those arms of mama and daddy are strong arms. They are a refuge.

### *The Everlasting Arms*

God's arms are our refuge. I love Deuteronomy 33:27, “The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Where do you turn when you are tired? Where do you go when you are bored? What do you turn to when you find yourself in financial need? Financial pressure is boring down on you. Where do you go? Where do you go when the pressure of illness and health problems come when you are already exhausted with work? What do you do when you are really happy? Where do you turn?

What is your refuge? What is your encouragement in the dark? That's your god. God wants us to turn away from

## **THE TIMES**

We come to a scandalous portion of the Word of God. Here we have a man, a prophet named Hosea. He's part of the school of the prophets. He's from northern Israel, in fact, he's the only prophet outside of Amos to have a message for apostate northern Israel.

Things are good in Israel. They are in a time of unprecedented prosperity.

## **THE AUTHOR: INTRODUCING HOSEA**

We are introduced to this prophet, Hosea. Although it is not expressly stated in the book of Hosea, it is apparent from the level of detail and familiarity focused on northern geography, that Hosea conducted his prophetic ministries in the northern Israel (Samaria) of which he was a native.

**1:1** | The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beerī, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

What do we know about the prophet Hosea? Hosea was a prophet who lived and prophesied just before the destruction of Israel in 722 BC. He preached to the northern kingdom. The prophet's name means “salvation,” likely a reference to Hosea's position in Israel as a beacon of hope to those who would repent and turn to God because of his

message.<sup>1</sup> He begins his ministry during the same time as the prophet Isaiah, from the prophet Uzziah all the way to Hezekiah. He has a very long and powerful ministry. He's gifted. He's bringing a powerful message.

### *The Message of God's Love*

He's a prophet. He's a great prophet. He's a mighty prophet. **The Word of the LORD comes to this great prophet** (1:1). God spoke directly to Hosea. Wow. That's pretty intense. What's God say? God asks Hosea to marry a prostitute in order to show how deeply he loves Israel, who was committing spiritual adultery, and breaking the covenant. God says in this book, "You tell Israel, I still love them. I love them and my love is powerful. My love is strong. My love is infinite. I love you with an everlasting love. I've written your name on the palms of my hands. I love you." What a message!

Isn't it ironic 2000 years after the coming of Christ, the Bible has been translated into thousands of languages, movies have been made about the life of Christ, and yet the world still is divided and does not seem to have a clue about the love of Christ? But go back to this parsonage and consider these three truths as they unfold. The first truth is this:

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## **1. GOD'S LOVE IS UNDESERVING (1:1-3A).**

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Here we learn about the man, Hosea. What we find is that he is relentless in his love to an undeserving wife. That love is really the story of the entire Bible. The Bible is God's love story to us, undeserving and unfaithful sinners.

### *Somebody's Getting Married!*

God tells Hosea: "I've got a wife for you." I can imagine Hosea: "Great news!" "I'd love to get married. I have been thinking about that LORD. I'm living up here in this northern unbelieving kingdom, and I've got just the girl, LORD. She's a very godly girl." God says, "Oh, I've got a girl for you."

"Yes? Who is she?" asks Hosea.

Listen to the story in verse 2.

1:2 | When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD'.

Hosea was one of only two writing prophets who ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel (Amos was the other). During the same time period Isaiah and Micah prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah. At the beginning of Hosea's ministry, the northern kingdom was quite prosperous under the reign of Jeroboam II. But though things appeared to be calm on the surface, underneath the torrents of the kingdom's destruction were swirling. The nation had forsaken the Lord. Though they retained allegiance to the Lord with their lips, their hearts were far from him.

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006), 448.

## *Hosea's Name*

They had begun to mingle elements of the Canaanites' fertility religion with the Lord's worship by engaging in sexual rites and drunken orgies which were thought to secure the giving of rain and the fertility of the land for their crops, and even the fertility of their women in childbirth. During these days of political and religious upheaval there prophesied a man whose very name, **Hosea**, means "salvation." His name was a glimmer of hope in the midst of a message of destruction.

### **INTRODUCING GOMER AND HER MOTHER DIBLAIM**

#### *What's in a Name?*

But the LORD had a different idea. "I've got a girl for you," says the Lord. "Oh wonderful" says Hosea, "Lord, I can't wait! Who is she?" "You mean 'What is she'. She's a prostitute."

"What?" says Hosea, confused. "What will the other prophets say?"

"I want you to marry a prostitute to show how Israel has committed adultery on me."

"What's her name?" "Her name is Gomer", says the Lord.

What kind of a name is **Gomer**? Gomer in Hebrew means "satiated", i.e. "full of lust". It's like the Lord is saying: "Her name suits her. Her name is Lust because she is a woman of whoredom, just like my people Israel." We read about her family in verse 3.

1:3a | So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim...

She's "Gomer, the daughter of **Diblaim**" (1:3), which means "fig-cake", a common aphrodisiac. Normally the father is listed, but it seems instead it's her mother, who according to Jewish tradition was of the same profession (whoredom). I can imagine Hosea. "What? What are you asking me to do Lord?"

The Lord says: "I'm asking you to marry a prostitute. My people Israel have committed whoredom." Shocking. Controversial. Even scandalous. That's how grace is. God's love is really scandalous. We need to read this book of Hosea.

#### *Hosea is a Tiny Book*

I want to show you an extreme case of unrelenting love in Hosea. Hosea is a tiny little book. You can read it in its entirety in about half an hour. There are fourteen short chapters, autobiographically written by a prophet called Hosea married to a prostitute named Gomer. He was living 700 years before Christ. He is preaching to Northern Israel that is about to be crushed and carried away by the Assyrian Kingdom. Let's read about it in Hosea 1. It is here we read about the unrelenting love of God for Israel and for us.

#### *Hosea's Evenings*

Hosea and his wife Gomer had three children, but tragedy struck that home even before the children came. For some unexplainable reason deep within the confines of Gomer's fallen heart, Gomer decided to thwart that love, and seduced by the allurements of the night life, she walked out of her home and started to sell herself in harlotry.

Many an evening this prophet who would be seen by people in the day preaching God's Word, would be seen in the streets at night in his beloved city looking for Gomer. At times we can imagine he'd be standing outside the brothel, just waiting for a moment

to talk with her, to express his love to her, and to win her back. In the prophet Hosea's home, God display's his love for us in such extraordinary terms. And if you will give me your attention, I want to take you through three profoundly moving truths. I promise you if we understand these truths it will be the most revolutionary thing in your life because from these truths, everything we know about love is defined.

### WHY MARRY A PROSTITUTE?

We find this truth as we observe Hosea looking for his wife whose broken her bond of commitment to him. The first message Hosea received from Yahweh was that the prophet should go out and marry a prostitute. God says to Hosea, "**Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom**" (1:2a). Somebody probably stands in the street and says, "We love you; we respect you; we honor you. You're a man of integrity. But we do have a question for you. *How can a holy man of God like you be in love with a filthy adulterous harlot like that?*" And Hosea says – "I'm really glad you asked, and I have an answer for you. Now I'm beginning to wonder *how a holy God like that could love such an adulterous nation like us.*" Hosea raises that question in his own mind. God told him to marry a prostitute because "**the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord**" (1:2).

Hosea was called to "**have children of whoredom**" with Gomer. What does this mean? He's to marry a whore and have children with her. The next verse tells us that Hosea was to "take Gomer" and she was to bear him children even while she was a prostitute.

### WHY DID GOD CHOOSE ISRAEL & YOU?

There was nothing exceptional in Israel for God to choose her, in fact, it was precisely the opposite.

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup>but it is because the Lord loves you (Deut 7:7-8a).

God chose Israel because they were completely undeserving, just like you. This is an ancient allegory not just about Israel, but about you. You are Gomer.

Are you prosperous like northern Israel? Do you think you deserve it?

...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved (Eph 1:4-6).

We deserve none of God's gifts. Where would you be right now in your life if God gave you what you deserve. Look over all the blessings in your life. Why do you have them? It's the sheer mercy of God. Do you see the mercy of God flowing in your life?

Why would God tell the prestigious prophet to marry a stained and sullied street walker? Brothers and sisters, this is an allegory not only about Israel, but about you. Are you aware of your great need for God's love? Are you aware that you are Gomer in this passage?

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## **2. GOD'S LOVE IS URGENTLY NEEDED (1:3-9).**

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### *Wake Up Call*

Have you ever needed a wakeup call? Sometimes we need to warning siren to tell us what's coming. I can remember as a kid in Oak Forest, IL, whenever a funnel cloud was spotted nearby, the tornado warning sirens would go off. Why were those important? Because years before, a tornado came through that area and wiped out a school. The siren is there to tell us: wake up! Get to safety.

Jesus' love is our place of refuge. Admit your sin. Get to the place of refuge. Wake up! Wake up! The siren in this text is a list of the names of Hosea and Gomer's children.

### *Living in Prosperity and Ease*

In Hosea's day, God's people were living in prosperity and carnal ease, and God had to awaken them to the need of his love. Bottom line: we can't trust in anything else, but Christ and his love.

So God tells Hosea to go out and marry a prostitute and have children with her. God wanted to awaken Israel to their dire situation, so he tells Gomer to name her children some very strange names. God uses these names to personify the people of Israel. He's using their names to get their attention. They needed a wake up call!

### **YOUR NAME IS MUD**

When I was a kid, and I did something wrong, my siblings would say, "Your name is mud!" What did that mean? It was a way of getting my attention and calling me to account.

God is getting the attention of his people. He does that by personally naming Hosea and Gomer's children. Israel wasn't listening! God had to get their attention. He wanted to awaken them to the urgency of his judgment. They were not changing because they were comfortable in great prosperity and luxury.

### *A Son Named Jezreel*

Gomer says, "Hosea, I'm pregnant." Gomer gives birth, and it's a boy. It's a time of celebration. So God gives the boy a name after a wonderful, victorious battle. The battle of Jezreel, where the dynasty of Ahab and Jezebel was put to a final end.

Yet we're going to read that the name Jezreel was not about victory, but about compromise. It was at that time that Israel had the opportunity to turn back to God, but instead they went right back to their idolatry. Jezreel is synonymous with superficial repentance. Hang with me and we'll read about it.

**1:3-5** | So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup>And the Lord said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup>And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

### **URGENT BECAUSE JUDGMENT IS COMING**

It is significant that the first child is named Jezreel, because God is going to bring the northern kingdom of Israel to an end in the Valley of Jezreel, right by Nazareth in the

north. This will be the location of their ultimate defeat and God would “**break the bow**” of the northern kingdom of Israel. As luxurious as the culture was, God was going to bring it to a swift end. Hosea records what happened.

The Valley of Jezreel (Armageddon) was synonymous with bloodshed. They may have used ‘Jezreel’ like we might say ‘Gettysburg’. Jehu ruthlessly slaughtered the previous dynasty, chief of whom were Ahab and Jezebel. Sounds good right? But God says: you northern Israel will have the same end. In 722 BC, the Assyrians invade and **put an end to the kingdom of the house of northern Israel**. Why does God **punish the house of Jehu**? Because he continued on in Baal worship. He had the opportunity to stop it. But he kept it going.

**Jehu** and his household went on to repeat the same idolatry of the Ahab and Jezebel and their predecessors (2 Kgs 10:31; 13:1). Since **Jehu** didn't go far enough, God would end the kingdom of northern Israel. Yet the end would not be the ultimate end. Northern Israel would never recover; they would never be brought back into the land; they would forever be forgotten as a people and become known as the Samaritans.

Yet in the new covenant, we know the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well who would have her eyes opened and become an early evangelist of the true Gospel. It is in northern Israel, in Galilee, that the Son of God would call eleven of his twelve disciples. It is in this land that the light of the Son of God would shine so brightly, just as the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed:

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations (Isa 9:2).

Judgment is coming if we don't fully repent. Jehu and all the other kings after him had the opportunity to turn things around. They didn't.

### *A Daughter Named: No Mercy*

Gomer (Lady Lust) conceives another child. Gomer says to Hosea: “I'm pregnant again.” And when the baby is born, they find out: it's a girl! What should we name her? Now this is curious. What a curious name. God says, “Call her No Mercy” (1:6).

God is sending a warning sign to northern Israel through the name God gives this daughter.

**1:6-7** | She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. <sup>7</sup>But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

### **URGENT BECAUSE SALVATION IS AVAILABLE**

The first child had been Hosea's own: his wife ‘bore him a son’ (1:3). The second and third are not said to have been his: the ‘by him’ of verse 3 is missing in verses 6 and 8. So

the joy of fatherhood was deeply clouded, and the children were living proofs of the infidelity of the marriage.<sup>2</sup>

Just like Gomer was unfaithful, Israel was unfaithful. Instead of trusting in God, Israel was trusting in the wealth of her neighbors, who worshipped the prosperity god named Baal. They had erected golden calf altars to Baal in Dan and Bethel. Assyria and Egypt are so rich and they provide protection through armies and swords and horses. Israel feels safe because of their prosperity.

God does not save by bow or by sword, by war or horses or horsemen. The northern kingdom was intoxicated with money. They were intoxicated with money. Anytime they had a need they turned to the pagan nations around them for more money: hiring armies for their own prosperity.

It was the best of times in Israel. Materialism was reigning. The more money they had, the more they worshipped the Baal idols, in this case in the form of a golden calf. There seemed to be no end to the prosperity of Israel. But God was going to bring it all to an end. "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1a). They were soon going to lose all their wealth. God warns those who "feel secure" that the Assyrian armies are coming to bring the northern kingdom's materialism to an end. Today's Baal idols are the wealth and prosperity of Christians who squander their wealth. Let's admit it. We are all guilty.

Materialism or fixation on earthly possessions is one mankind's greatest temptations. Wealth in itself is not condemned in the Scriptures. In fact, it is often considered a gift or blessing. But the Bible warns against the dangers of wealth and gives instruction about its proper use. We are called to be content like Paul, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" (Phil 4:11).

What a strange name for a child: No Mercy! Yet God is demonstrating what we all really deserve. We deserve **no mercy**. We deserve to be cut off from God's family. Isn't that what we deserve? Where does this leave us? God lays down the law with the name of this girl: you deserve judgment, no mercy, to be cut off from God. That's why God is saying all these extreme things to his people. They deserve judgment, but they are going to get love. They urgently need God's love. We deserve God's wrath, but we get his love.

### *A Son Named Not My People*

The third child born to Gomer is a boy! How exciting! What's the name of this strapping little baby boy? God says: "Call his 'Not my People.'"

1:8-9 | When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son.<sup>9</sup> And the Lord said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God."

### **URGENT BECAUSE ETERNITY IS AT STAKE**

We see in this name that there's an urgency because eternity is at stake! If you worship other gods, God says to Israel, you are "Not My People." What a name for a child.

How shocking! Isn't Israel God's chosen people? Yes! But Paul tells us that not everyone who is born as an Israelite "belong to Israel" as the true people of God (Rom 9:6). Paul tells us that takes faith.

<sup>2</sup> Derek Kidner, *The Message of Hosea: Love to the Loveless*, ed. J. Alec Motyer and Derek Tidball, *The Bible Speaks Today* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 22.



God requires our faith in him exclusively, or we cannot rightly be called his people. Eternity is at stake! **You are not God's people if you worship other gods.** That's what he warns Israel of old. They had to break down their idols. They had tear down their Baal altars and their golden calf temples.

They were no longer God's people. They didn't do it outright. They kept adding other gods and idols until the true God was just one among many. We call that syncretism.

### *What is Syncretism?*

What is syncretism? The incorporation into religious faith and practice of elements from other religions, resulting in a loss of integrity and assimilation to the surrounding culture.<sup>3</sup>

Let me put it plainly. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Eternity is at stake. No one else can secure your eternity.

God's people in Hosea's day were satisfied with their **syncretistic worship of Baal and Jehovah**. Baal worship was a type of fertility and prosperity worship of the bull and was common in many cultures: from Egypt to the Canaanites, the bull fertility god was worshipped everywhere. Sadly, throughout their history, Israel tried to syncretize the worship of Baal and Jehovah. It just doesn't work.

### *D.L. Moody Quote*

The very nature of idolatry is to worship a created thing as if it were God. <sup>4</sup> D.L. Moody said, "You don't have to go to heathen lands today to find false gods. America is full of them. Whatever you love more than God is your idol."

### *Idolatry Today*

Today the most common form of syncretism is to try to love the world and Christ.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Jas 4:4).

Jesus says to the church at Laodicea:

I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth (Rev 3:15-16).

The reason the apostasy of Israel is so dangerous is because they still act like they love God. They've got a temple. They've got an altar. I was over at the very place that the people of Hosea's day worshipped. In the city of Dan up in the northernmost part of Israel, it's still there: the altar to the golden calf.

Listen, there's no idol that can satisfy you like **the love of God**. You can't serve two masters. Christ must have all of your heart. What idol is it that is keeping you from the fullness of God's love? What idol has taken the place of Jesus so that you no longer treasure his love? I'm so amazed by the love of God. I urgently and desperately need it. I don't deserve it! But I'm so thankful that God is pursuing me! He's unrelenting.

<sup>3</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 36.

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### 3. GOD'S LOVE IS UNRELENTING (1:10-2:1).

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God will stop at nothing to reverse your curse. In Hosea 1:9, God gives the greatest curse possible to this people and says, "**I am not your God**" (1:9). Gomer is unreconciled with Hosea, living in harlotry. In Hosea 3:1-2, God commands Hosea to buy Gomer back, and the prophet pays for her life. We see the promise of God's love for his people foreshadowed in the living parable of chapter 1.

1:8-9 | When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. <sup>9</sup> And the Lord said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God."

After Gomer weans the third child, God gives the tells us why he would warn them (and us). He's got a plan to redeem us. "He took our sins and our sorrow and made them his very own." He's got a plan!

#### UNRELENTING IN HIS PROMISE

The people he said would be cut off and have no mercy and not be his people don't get what they deserve. We see a reversal of the curse. To prove God's intention in reversing Israel's curse, he quotes his original promise to Abraham in Genesis 13:16.

1:10 | Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered.

#### *The Abrahamic Covenant*

This is the glorious Abrahamic Covenant spoken of in Genesis 15. God tells Abraham: "Count the stars" and "Number the sand" (Gen 13). Can you do it? Abraham couldn't either. Paul says in Galatians that in Christ we all become part of that promise. God's blessing is coming to all people because of the true Seed of Abraham: Jesus Christ.

And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." <sup>6</sup> And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness (Gen 15:5-6)

This is the glorious Abrahamic Covenant is for you! All who come to Christ get the promise!

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gal 3:29).

Hosea is saying in 1:10, "Christ is coming!" That was God's promise to the OT believers. Don't worry, Christ is coming. We find that he's the king that's coming to bring his people under him. Aren't you glad he has come in this New Testament age?

#### UNRELENTING IN JESUS

We see the words of the curse upon Israel are reversed and words of hope are issued. The children are renamed!

**1:11-2:1** | And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. <sup>2:1</sup> Say to your brothers, "You are my people," and to your sisters, "You have received mercy."

### *No Longer Scattered, but Gathered Under Christ*

All the names are reversed to show Jesus. Jezreel means "scattered." The children of Israel would be scattered across the nations. They would be put into captivity in 722BC at the very end of Hosea's ministry. Hosea would see his own people scattered. But wait! Hosea 1:11 says that instead of being scattered...

**1:11** | And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

The hope centers on a Person under whom both Judah and Israel will be united. Who is this Person and what does this promise mean? Christ is appointed as the Head of the church! Christ is directly mentioned here: "**they shall appoint for themselves one head**" (2:11). This reminds us of many of the glorious New Testament proclamations, like the one in Ephesians 1:22-23, "And he [God] put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

The ultimate rescue of Hosea's children, according to the apostles, occurs in the times of the New Testament Church. The inspired authors of the New Testament saw the play on the names of Hosea's children as being ultimately fulfilled in Christ and his Church of both Jews and Gentiles. Note the following references to Hosea 1 in the New Testament. There are two (1 Pet 2:9-10 and Rom 9:25-26). Both apply these promises to Jesus and his church.

We are no longer Jezreel – scattered, but we are gathered under Christ.

### *No Longer Under God's Wrath*

Jesus is our No Mercy and our Not My People. He took God's wrath for me and you.

**2:1** | Say to your brothers, "You are my people," and to your sisters, "You have received mercy."

Christ took my curse on the tree. Christ bore my sins and my sorrows and presents me faultless, justified before an Almighty God. We who have come by faith to Christ, both Jew and Gentile, fulfill the promise of Hosea. Because of Christ are the beloved sons and daughters of the living God! We were once not his people, but now we God's beloved children! God stopped at nothing to purchase Israel back. The events of Hosea 1 are actually Gospel promises that come to pass when God, through the Jews, reaches the Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles are called by grace through faith to become the true people of God.

### *Conclusion*

What a shocking love story that ultimately points to the greatest love story in God's Son laying down his life on the cross for an unworthy and unfaithful bride. In the symbolism of Hosea, God is the Prophet and we are the prostitute. In a very real sense, I am Gomer and so are you! We are unfaithful people who deserve God's wrath, not his mercy.

### *Celebrate Jesus*

What a joy that Jesus loves his bride. We are all Gomers. He's come to redeem us from this life of spiritual prostitution. Do you believe that Jesus is the answer? He's the only way. You cannot be truly transformed through any other way.

But Jesus has become our Jezreel when he was judged by Almighty God, his Father. He took the wrath of God and won the victory against sin, Satan, death, and hell! I was under that curse. My name was Jezreel, awaiting judgment. My names were No Mercy and Not My People. He who knew no sin became sin for me that I might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor 5:21). Jesus gave me mercy. Jesus took my judgment. And now I can say I am not one of God's people. What a testimony. All because of Jesus!