

Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, And Lo-Ammi

The book of Hosea is a prophecy against Israel because of the harlotry committed by Israel in going after other gods. Because of their harlotry, Hosea was told by God to marry a harlot and bring forth children (1:2). He married Gomer the daughter of Diblaim and she bore him a son. The Lord told him in vs. 4 to call his name Jezreel. The name Jezreel means "*God scatters*" and this is what God would do to Israel because of their harlotry. After Jezreel, Gomer bore a daughter and the Lord told Hosea in vs. 6 to call her name Lo-Ruhamah because God was going to show "*no mercy*" towards Israel. Finally, Gomer bore a third child, a son. The Lord told Hosea to name him Lo-Ammi because God said, "*For you are not My people, and I will not be your God*" (vs. 9). These three children were to represent God's feelings toward Israel and what He was going to do to them.

According to the text, Hosea's wife played the harlot again and went after other men. Even though the text doesn't say specifically what happened during the time that Gomer was bearing children, it is possible that the last two children could have been from another man. One would imply this because the third child's name is Lo-Ammi which means "*You are not my people.*" Whether any of the children were of another man or not, Gomer eventually did play the harlot again just as Israel had played the harlot against God.

Then in 3:1 God says to Hosea, "*Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.*" What a hard thing for Hosea to have to do: bring his wife back after she had been committing fornication with other men! Nevertheless, this was an object lesson in which Hosea's love for his wife was to represent the love that God had for His people. Even though Israel had played the harlot and had left God, He was willing to take them back and love them again.

God had already said in chapter 2 that He was going to restore Israel. He says in vs. 14, "*Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her.*" Even though God was going to punish them (2:1-13), He was going to comfort them with restoration. In vs. 23 God says, "*Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, and I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' and they shall say, 'You are my God!'*" The three names of the children are brought back in this verse. But now, instead of "*scattering*" (Jezreel), He is going to bring them back. Instead of showing "*no mercy*" (Lo-Ruhamah), He is going to show mercy. And instead of

saying, "You are not my people" (Lo-Ammi), He will call them His people and they will call Him their God.

The Apostle Paul mentions this passage in the Roman letter. He says in Romans 9:22-26, *"What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea: 'I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God.'"* In the context of this passage, Paul is showing that God was willing to receive the Gentiles, those who were not His people, and give them salvation! God did this in Acts 10 when the Spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his household. From this point on, whether one is a Jew or not makes no difference. The important thing is that we are a new creature. Then we become spiritual Israel! *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God"* (Galatians 6:15-16).

Once one becomes a new creation (Romans 6:3-4), he must live faithfully! It is so easy to fall back into sin again. In a sense when we do this, it is like playing the harlot and going after other gods (James 4:4). We may not fall down and worship an image, but we may put our efforts toward obtaining physical possessions and leave no room for God. This is, in a sense, idolatry and we must turn from it. If we do, God loves us and is willing to take us back and give us the love that will last through all eternity! *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Psalm 139:23-24).

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