

In this lesson, we look at God's plan to lure Israel back to Him. It is also, of course, Hosea's plan to lure his wife Gomer back to him. We must understand that God is not finished with Israel. Israel is the bride of Jehovah God. For thousands of years Israel has been estranged from her husband Jehovah God. It will not always be this way. God has a plan to bring Israel back into the fold. It lies in future years.

Let us look into the Scripture in this lesson and see the plan of God unfold.

(Verse 14-15)

God wants His people to serve Him. It remains that God is a jealous God. Here God speaks of the time when he will reach out to reconcile Israel unto him. God says "I will work hard to get her back." The word *allure* means to persuade by means of attractive benefits. It refers to tender and loving speech God is going to use to charm Israel in his effort to restore her as His own. It speaks of the lovely gifts God will bestow upon Israel to entice her unto Him. The Lord says in closing verse 14 that He will "*speaking comfortably unto her.*"

Take note of the meeting place where God plans to meet Israel. It is the wilderness. Of course a wilderness is a place where life once was but has withered. When you have strayed from the Lord, it may lead you to a place where you may have to start over again. He may take you back to where there was life, but it withered. While Gomer was astray from God a wilderness was formed. She must start over again. Yet, the important thing is "*He is with us.*" "I will meet her in the wilderness" God says of Israel. There is silence in the wilderness. Sometimes God puts us in a position of solitude or loneliness so that we will listen to what He has to say. One man I knew said God put him on his back in a hospital bed so He could get his attention and speak to Him. One of the biggest obstacles to a backslider returning to God's fellowship is getting over self. When there is silence we can hear God's tender voice and not self or others. When there is silence, His joy is magnified to us.

God promises Israel vineyards in verse 15. How good is God! He didn't just promise Israel grapes or even wine. He promises if she will come back to fellowship He will give her the entire vineyard. God is good! A vineyard speaks of eternal supply. A bowl of grapes is soon exhausted. The cup gets empty that contains the wine. But if we have the vineyard we have an eternal promise. Israel is in God's plan forever and ever.

Verse 15 tells us the Lord plans to give Israel "*the valley of Achor for a door of hope.*" We know from Bible history that Achor

is a dreadful place. We remember the stoning of Achan and his family took place there when Achan stole goods from the enemy. It was a place of bitterness and death. “Achor” means “trouble.” But yet, Achor became a gateway to the promised land for Israel. God can turn *trouble* into a *door of hope*. God can take bitterness and make it sweet. Israel was at the very doorstep of Canaan when Achan committed the sin. Yes, God can use a place of bitterness and, through His love, transition it into a gateway to the land of promise! But it cannot happen without the cooperation of the person who has strayed as did Gomer and Israel. What a merciful God we serve! God is so good and caring that He can use your mistakes as a “door of hope” for the future.

(Verse 16-17)

These two verses tell us that God will one day change His relationship with Israel. When the Lord changes you, He changes your heart and your attitude. When your heart and attitude are transformed by the Spirit of God, there is a change in your relationship with God and with people as well. In future days when God moves upon Israel, she will call God by a new name. That name will be “Ishi” which means “my husband.” At the present time Israel knows God as Baali. Baali means “my master.”

The word “Ishi” and the word “Baali” have a similar meaning. Yet, they are very different. I never want my wife to call me “master.” When someone is your master, there is no intimacy in the relationship. But, when they call you husband it indicates intimacy. Do you see the difference? In the day in which we live, Israel’s relationship with God is as Baali, that is, “master.” One who is a servant refers to his leader as Master. The servant does not always do the will of the master for he is *made* to do what he does. He is only serving the master because he is required to serve. Husbands, would you want a wife who is forced to be your wife? The husband and wife relationship should not be this way. Marriage is to be, according to God’s Word, a relationship of love.

Verse 17 shows us just how far Israel has drifted from God. Israel was referring to God as “Baalim.” Israel was so far from God they were referring to God using the name of false gods! God promises when He returns to earth to establish the Millennial Age, Israel will no longer call Him Baalim. That name will be removed from their vocabulary. Don’t miss the lesson for you and me in verse 17. That lesson is: when we enter into a relationship with God at salvation, He changes our vocabulary.

(Verse 18)

When the time comes that Israel is restored unto the Lord, God will make a covenant between them and the animal kingdom. Because of sin in the Garden of Eden, the animal kingdom is

hostile toward mankind. Before sin came to the garden, the animal kingdom marched tamely before Adam so he could name them. Now, many beasts are wild and will harm you. Some beasts destroy men's crops! This will change. God will once again calm the animal kingdom, and they will not be wild toward mankind. According to this verse the covenant will cover the beast of the field and the fowls of the air and the creeping things of the ground. When we look at these three categories of animals, we see that it includes the entire animal kingdom!

Once tamed and a covenant in place between Israel and the animal kingdom, the animals will no longer be harmful. The animals will no longer devour our vines and fig trees. Most animals fear man. I long for the day when a beautiful 10-point buck will walk up to me and allow me to rub its nose. This will happen in the millennial reign of our Lord over the earth and the house of Israel. There are many scriptures that further describe this wonderful day. I ask you to read Isaiah 11:6-8 and Isaiah 65:25.

In the day of the millennial age God will break the bow and the sword. The bow and the sword we know little of in this age, but the sword and the bow symbolize weapons of warfare in this verse. Throughout history Israel has been a warring nation. They have known very few days when there was peace. In the time of the millennial age, weapons will be destroyed. Praise God, no more war!

(Verse 19-20)

In the age of the millennial reign, God has in store a wonderful relationship between Jehovah God and Israel. We see in verse 19 the word "betrothed." We do not use this word in our everyday speech in our culture. In Bible times betrothed referred to "a new beginning with all the freshness of the first love." It does not mean "patching up the differences." When Israel and the Lord reunite it will be as the early days of courtship. It will be a new beginning. The *past* will be forever *forgotten*. Any differences will be as though they never happened. That, my friend, is a true new beginning.

Betrothal in ancient Israel was much more binding than engagement is in the modern Western society. The Law of Moses treated a betrothed couple as though they were legally married. At the time of the betrothal the man would pay a price to the bride's father to seal the agreement. What will the Lord give Israel? Verse 19 says the gift of "righteousness, and judgment, and loving-kindness, and mercies" will be the gift God passes to Israel. Wow!

You may say "I sure would like to have such gifts." Well, you can have them if you will come to Christ as your Savior. You that are saved, when you were married to God He gave you gifts. He

placed within your heart righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, and mercy. We must ask the question therefore “how can a person be saved and not change?” Wonderful question. Many people who say they are saved have never had a salvation experience. They are saved in *word only* and not in their heart. They are not betrothed unto God. Again, let us be reminded that the betrothal was as binding as marriage. If you are saved, you are involved in a relationship with God. You are not to share yourself with anyone else. You are bought with a price and you are not your own. When you share yourself with the world after you are saved you are walking in whoredom.

May I insert a few words about eternal security. From the time God raised up Israel to be His bride, she *never* ceased to be married to Him. While Israel strayed from God and walked in whoredom He was displeased. However, the marriage vow remained binding. When a sinner is saved they are eternally God’s. A saved person may stray, but they are still in a relationship by covenant with God. Do you know why your children and your friends have been smoking dope for 10 years yet claim to be saved? It is because they have never been involved in a relationship with Jesus Christ as their savior. A *saved* person can stray from God and do some horrific things, but they can never cease to be a child of God. A saved person may stray but will be punished by father God for straying and will return to God. Salvation is a birth and is not reversible. Quit praying for your loved ones “to get right with God” and start praying for them to “get saved.”

(Verse 21-23)

These three verses elaborate further on the national restoration of Israel. The day of the national restoration, which will come in the time of the millennial reign, will be a time of abundance for Israel. It will be as if the heavens and the earth have been granted permission by God to rain blessings upon Israel. There are many Old Testament and New Testament scriptures which speak of the blessed time of Israel's restoration. The earth will be a place of bounty.

Verse 22 speaks again of the firstborn child of Hosea. His name is Jezreel. Jezreel was first mentioned in chapter 1 verse four. The name means “scattered as seed.” Israel will be re-gathered in the time of the millennial. There will be an abundance of corn and wine and oil for the house of Israel. They will lack nothing. Verse 23 says God will plant Israel on the earth as a crop is planted. Israel will inhabit the earth in abundance.

The second born child to the house of Hosea, which we believe to be illegitimate, was named Lo-ruhamah. The name means “no mercy.” Her name was changed to Ruhamah in chapter 2 verse 1,

meaning “compassion or mercy.” In the time of national restoration God says in verse 23 *“I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy.”* The third child, also illegitimate, had the name Lo-Ammi. This name means “not my people.” In chapter 2 verse 1, God changed her name to Ammi meaning “my people.” Verse 23 says that in the day of the millennial God will say to Israel *“which were not my people, thou art my people.”* Israel will reply to God *“thou art my God.”* In that day of restoration they will not call the true and living God “Baalim” as stated in verse 17. They will know He is the true and living God and will acknowledge Him as such.