

# A Biblical History of the Lost Tribes of Israel Vol. II

containing:

Who Is A Gentile?  
The Prophet Hosea:  
Setting the Stage  
Fulfilling Anger  
Fulfilling Love

by  
Dean & Susan Wheelock

And so all Israel will be saved,  
As it is written:  
"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,  
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;  
For this is My covenant with them,  
When I take away their sins."  
*Rom. 11:26-27*

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## ~ Introduction ~

Then say to them,  
"Thus says the Lord GOD:  
'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations,  
Wherever they have gone,  
And will gather them from every side  
And bring them into their own land;  
And I will make them one nation in the land,  
On the mountains of Israel;  
And one king shall be king over them all;  
They shall no longer be two nations,  
Nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.'  
Ezekiel 37:21-22



One of the most fascinating enigmas of history is what became of the Lost Tribes of Israel. Historians, for the most part, have no good answers. Some of them simply dodge the question by proclaiming that the entire story is a Biblical myth and has no basis in history. In other words, they claim that the northern Kingdom of Israel either did not exist or was assimilated into the Kingdom of Judah in the south. This latter position is the traditional line in modern Judaism as well.

Many Believers do not buy into these "myths." Instead, they believe that the migrations of the tribes can be followed historically, at least to some degree, and that today there exists millions (if not billions) of people on the face of the earth who can legitimately claim to be the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but who do not have the family records or traditions to prove it.

The Almighty Creator is performing a great work on this earth, and the children of Israel (all of them) are central to that work. Without both houses of Israel, the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) will fail, for both houses are included in many prophecies yet to be fulfilled. Therefore, we can be assured they (both houses) will be brought back together at the end.

Included in the New Covenant is God's preparation of a Bride, from both Houses of Israel, for His Son *Y'shua*. The final outcome will be a permanent marriage, one that will last for all eternity:

**"I will betroth you to Me forever;  
Yes, I will betroth you to Me  
In righteousness and justice,  
In lovingkindness and mercy;  
<sup>20</sup> I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
And you shall know the LORD [*YHVH*]."**

(Hos. 2:19-20)

This marvelous story begins with the calling of the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt to be molded into a nation called Israel. That was the subject of the first booklet in this series; *A Biblical History of the Lost Tribes of Israel* (SPHLT1).

This second Volume begins with *Who Is a Gentile?* which was first published as an article in *Hebrew Roots*® Issue 09-3. It discusses the term Gentile (*Goy*) as it is used in Scripture. By this time, it is entirely possible that nearly every human being (on the face of the earth today) carries some of Abraham's DNA.

The three chapters which follow, were first published in Issue 01-1. They constitute a commentary on the Book of *Hosea*, one of the twelve "Minor" Prophets. The initial chapter, *Setting the Stage*, introduces the purpose of prophecy in general and the prophecy contained in the Book of *Hosea* in particular.

Following that introduction is the chapter, *Fulfilling Anger*, which covers chapters 4-14 of *Hosea*. This is where God lays out His many complaints against the spiritual adultery (idolatry) of the northern kingdom (the House of Israel) and why He was sending her away with a written "Bill of Divorce" (Jer. 3:8).

The last topic, *Fulfilling Love*, inspects the first three chapters, of the Book of *Hosea*, showing how God will not only take back the House of Israel, but how He will reunite her with her sister, the House of Judah, never again to be separated from each other or from Him. This is the prophecy which we look forward to seeing fulfilled in the Kingdom of God during the Millennial reign of *Y'shua HaMashiach* on this earth:

**"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers."**  
(Jer. 3:18)

It is our hope that you will find deeper insight into the Plan of God and the Scriptures by coming to understand what God did with Israel and Judah so many centuries ago.

Shalom!

Dean & Susan Wheelock

Beit Shalom, 2013

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## ~ Who Is a Gentile? ~

Praise the LORD,  
All you Gentiles!  
Laud Him,  
All you peoples!  
For His merciful kindness is great toward us,  
And the truth of the LORD endures forever.  
Praise the LORD!  
*Psalm 117:1-2*

**I**n current terminology, the main definition of a Gentile is:

"One who is not of the Jewish faith or is of a non-Jewish nation." (*The American Heritage College Dictionary*)

Exactly who, in a Biblical sense, are the Gentiles and what do the Hebrew words *goy* גוי (*gohee* #1471) and *goyim* (plural form), from which the word Gentile comes, actually mean?

### ~ The Nations ~

The Hebrew word *goy* (Strong's #1471) is defined as:

1471 גוי goy {go'-ee}

**Meaning:** n m 1) nation, people 1a) nation, people 1a1) usually of non-Hebrew people 1a2) of descendants of Abraham 1a3) of Israel 1b) of swarm of locusts, other animals (fig.) n pr m 1c) *Goyim*? = "nations"

**Origin:** apparently from the same root as 01465; TWOT - 326e

**Usage:** AV - nation 374, heathen 143, Gentiles 30, people 11; 558.

As you can see from the definition, this word has multiple meanings. Even though today the word is mostly used to denote people who are not Jewish, that was not the original Biblical meaning. The primary meaning of the word is really "nation" (374 times). As can be seen in the *King James Version*, *goy* is also used to categorize people as "heathen" (143 times) far more times than as merely "Gentiles" (only 30 times). Even the descendants of Abraham are referred to in Hebrew as *goyim*:

"No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations [*goyim*]."  
(Gen. 17:5)

God formed the children of Israel into a nation (*goy*) to dwell among all of the other nations (*goyim*). In fact, the other nations were defined as to their number by the seventy children of Israel who came out of Egypt:

"When the most High divided to the nations [*goyim*] their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."  
(Deut. 32:8)

"All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already)." (Ex. 1:5)

In Jewish understanding the actual number of nations in the world is 71 (seventy Gentile nations plus Israel), not the over 200 which is claimed by the United Nations.

Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land and God began to drive out the nations who were dwelling there so they could take possession. However, after Joshua's death, the children of Israel sinned by going after pagan gods:

"When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD [YHVH] nor the work which He had done for Israel. <sup>11</sup> Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD [YHVH], and served the Baals; <sup>12</sup> and they forsook the LORD [YHVH] God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people [*am*] who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD [YHVH] to anger. <sup>13</sup> They forsook the LORD [YHVH] and served Baal and the Ashtoreths."  
(Judg. 2:10-13)

As a result of these transgressions, the children of Israel became a nation (*goy*) much like the nations (*goyim*) around them and God ceased driving the other nations out:

"Then the anger of the LORD [YHVH] was hot against Israel; and He said, 'Because this nation [*goy* - Israel] has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, <sup>21</sup> I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations [*goyim*] which Joshua left when he died, <sup>22</sup> so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD [YHVH], to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not.' <sup>23</sup> Therefore the LORD [YHVH] left those nations [*goyim*], without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua."  
(Judg. 2:20-23)

The new nation of Israel was still special to God, but only because of his love for the Patriarchs and His fidelity to the promise He had made to the fathers:

"It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations [*goyim*] that the LORD [YHVH] your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD [YHVH] swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>6</sup> Therefore understand that the LORD [YHVH] your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people."  
(Deut. 9:5-6)

In the end, not only Israel, but all the nations of the earth will belong to God and they will be His people:

"Arise, O God, judge the earth;  
For You shall inherit all nations."  
(Psalm 82:8)

~ The Heathen ~

As mentioned, the *King James Version* of Scripture translates the word *goy* as "heathen" 143 times. However, most modern translations never use the word "heathen," but instead translate *goy* as "nations" in these passages as well. However, the context of one particular passage strongly implies that "heathen" or "pagan" should be used. Here is the way the *Tanakh* translates this passage:

**"A psalm of Asaph.**

**"O God, heathens [*goyim*] have entered Your domain, defiled Your holy temple, and turned Jerusalem into ruins."**  
(Psalm 79:1 TNK)

David Stern uses the term "pagans:"

**"A psalm of Asaf:**

**"God, the pagans [*goyim*] have entered your heritage. They have defiled your holy temple and turned Yerushalayim into rubble."**  
(Psalm 79:1 CJB)

Certainly, the terms "heathen" or "pagan" are legitimate alternatives to the more neutral term "nations," for in reality all nations that do not worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are heathen or pagan.

The same confusion prevails in the Greek Scriptures (New Testament) concerning the word *ethnos*:

**1484 ἔθνος** *ethnos* {eth'-nos}

**Meaning:** 1) a multitude (whether of men or of beasts) associated or living together 1a) a company, troop, swarm 2) a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus 2a) the human race 3) a race, nation, people group 4) in the OT, foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, Gentiles 5) Paul uses the term for Gentile Christians

**Origin:** probably from 1486; TDNT - 2:364,201; n n

**Usage:** AV - Gentiles 93, nation 64, heathen 5, people 2; 164

Here the *King James Version* primarily translates *ethnos* as "Gentiles," with "nation" running second. Only five times does it translate *ethnos* as "heathen." Most modern translations render *ethnos* as "Gentiles" or "nations." Yet, once again, it is clear that the term "Gentile," as it refers to people who are not part of God's chosen people, are automatically considered to be "pagan" or "heathen" unless they have converted. Thus, the *KJV* renders *ethnos* as "heathen" in Acts 4:

**"Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said,**

**'Why did the heathen [*ethnos*] rage,**

**And the people imagine vain things?'"** (Psalm 2:1)

(Acts 4:25)

Thus we see, that the term Gentiles has become a code word for pagan or heathen, even though the original Hebrew word *goy* was used as a label for the children of Israel as well as the other nations of the earth. It's all a matter of context.

~ Gentiles Today ~

As already noted, today the term Gentile is almost universally used to designate anyone who is not Jewish. Included in this generic category are millions of people who are actually very closely related to the Jews, those people descended directly from the Ten Lost Tribes of the House of Israel. Originally, the "lost" tribes of the Northern Kingdom of the House of Israel were resettled in upper Mesopotamia, in the cities of the *Medes*, and other areas, after their deportation by the Assyrians in 722 BCE:

**"Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 'In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.'" (II Kings 17:5-6)**

Following this deportation by the Assyrians, two other empires arose, the *Babylonian Empire* followed by the *Medo-Persian Empire*. Even prior to the fall of the *Medo-Persian Empire* to Alexander the Great (c. 300 BCE), many of the "lost" tribes migrated into the *Caucasus* region of western Asia (the area between the Black and Caspian Seas) where some gathered together into the *Parthian Empire* (an empire never conquered by the Romans). Centuries later they followed an earlier migration into Western Europe and eventually many of them crossed the Atlantic to the Americas.

Today these "lost" descendants of the northern kingdom of the House of Israel are scattered everywhere over the face of the earth. Their genes having surfaced among all races and ethnic groups.

Space does not permit a complete retelling of their story (many whole books have been written on the subject), but suffice it to say that many *Caucasian* people (though not necessarily all) of Europe and America are directly descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, just like the modern day Jews. Interesting enough, most American Black people also share the same ancestry, either as a result of their ancestors slave experience in America, or (in the case of many) from a migration of Carthage Israelites into western Africa centuries previous to their being brought to America.

(More information on this topic is available at: [www.UnitedIsrael.org](http://www.UnitedIsrael.org))

~ The House of Israel in Prophecy ~

The *Book of Hosea* prophecies how the northern Ten Tribes of Israel, were going to lose their identity because God was determined to cast them away from the Promised Land, into the Gentile (pagan) nations of the world, as payment for their idolatrous practices (termed "harlotry"):

**"When the LORD [*YHVH*] began to speak by Hosea, the LORD [*YHVH*] said to Hosea:**

**'Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry**

**And children of harlotry,**

**For the land has committed great harlotry**

**By departing from the LORD [*YHVH*].'**

<sup>3</sup> "So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup> Then the LORD [YHWH] said to him:

**'Call his name Jezreel,  
For in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of  
Jezreel on the house of Jehu,  
And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.  
<sup>5</sup> It shall come to pass in that day  
That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of  
Jezreel.'**" (Hosea 1:2-5)

The name *Jezreel* יִזְרְעֵאל (Yeez reh-ehl' #3157) means "God sows." God had a plan, and that plan was to scatter the physical seed of the House of Israel throughout the earth, so that many millions of otherwise full blooded "Gentile" people would eventually become partial physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

A second child continues *Hosea's* prophetic scenario:

**"And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him:**

**'Call her name Lo-Ruhamah,  
For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel,  
But I will utterly take them away.  
<sup>7</sup> Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah,  
Will save them by the LORD [YHWH] their God,  
And will not save them by bow,  
Nor by sword or battle,  
By horses or horsemen.'**" (Hosea 1:6-7)

The name *Lo-Ruhamah* לֹא־רַחֲמָה (Loh Roo-hah-mah' #3819) means "no mercy." God had decided that He would send the House of Israel away, without mercy, for many thousands of years. However, God also determined that He would continue to have mercy on the House of Judah, even though they too deserved to be exiled. The reason for God's mercy on Judah was so the promised Messiah would be a descendant of Judah, as prophesied in Genesis 49.

The *Hosea* prophecy continues:

**"Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. <sup>9</sup> Then God said:**

**'Call his name Lo-Ammi,  
For you are not My people [am],  
And I will not be your God.'**" (Hosea 1:8-9)

The name *Lo-Ammi* לֹא־עַמִּי (Loh Ah-mee' #3818) means "not My people."

For many centuries God had put up with the idolatry of the House of Israel and now He was sending them away. Many years later the prophet Jeremiah revealed that God had actually written the House of Israel a bill of divorcement. That is why they could no longer be called God's people:

**"Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also."** (Jer. 3:8)

Despite the fact that the House of Israel was to be sent away and given a bill of divorce, so they would lose track of their true identity, God promised that eventually, while still divorced from Him, they would become so numerous that no one would be able to count them:

**"Yet the number of the children of Israel  
Shall be as the sand of the sea,  
Which cannot be measured or numbered.  
And it shall come to pass  
In the place where it was said to them,  
"You are not My people,"  
There it shall be said to them,  
"You are sons of the living God.'"** (Hosea 1:10)

Eventually, this prophecy will be completely fulfilled to God's satisfaction, He has promised to call the House of Israel back home to Him and rejoin them with the House of Judah into a united people:

**"Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel  
Shall be gathered together,  
And appoint for themselves one head;  
And they shall come up out of the land,  
For great will be the day of Jezreel!"** (Hosea 1:11)

This portion of the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. Indeed it will be a great day when God harvests the descendants of the House of Israel which He has "sown" throughout the world. That harvest will culminate when the Two Sticks, of which Ezekiel spoke, will be rejoined in God's own hand at the return of the Messiah *Y'shua*:

**"Again the word of the LORD [YHWH] came to me, saying,**

<sup>16</sup> **'As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: "For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions." Then take another stick and write on it, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions." <sup>17</sup> Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.**

<sup>18</sup> **"And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, "Will you not show us what you mean by these?" --**

<sup>19</sup> **say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand. <sup>20</sup> And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.'**

<sup>21</sup> **"Then say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; <sup>22</sup> and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. <sup>23</sup> They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned,**

**and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God."'''**  
(Ezek. 37:15-23)

Chapter two of *Hosea* confirms the return of the House of Israel into God's grace. At that time *Lo-Ruhamah* (no mercy) will become known as *Ruhamah* רַחֲמָה (mercy) and *Lo-Ammi* (not My people) will become *Ammi* עַמִּי (My people):

**"And it shall be, in that day,' Says the LORD [YHVH],  
'That you will call Me "My Husband,"  
And no longer call Me "My Master,"  
<sup>17</sup> For I will take from her mouth the names of  
the Baals,  
And they shall be remembered by their name  
no more.'"**  
(Hosea 2:16-17)

### ~ Becoming Gentiles ~

Thus we see how the major portion of the children of Israel -- ten tribes out of thirteen; as Joseph's portion was divided between Ephraim and Manasseh to make an extra tribe -- lost their identity and came to believe themselves to be "Gentiles," no longer part of the *Commonwealth of Israel*. Not only were they divorced from God, they were totally estranged from their brother Judah (the Jewish people).

Contained within the Southern Kingdom of the House of Judah were the land portions of three tribes: Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. While the territory of Simeon was part of the House of Judah, the majority of the members of that tribe were scattered throughout the Northern Kingdom (see Gen. 49:5-7), and went into Assyrian captivity. That left only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to comprise the bulk of the Southern Kingdom of the House of Judah:

**"And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon."**  
(I Kings 12:21)

Most members of the tribe of Levi, who lived in the northern kingdom, fled to Judah because Jeroboam rejected them from fulfilling their Levitical office. Also, the Southern Kingdom was where the Temple stood, and where proper Levitical work was centered:

**"For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD [YHVH]."**  
(II Chron. 11:14)

From that point on, Scripture does not speak about the House of Israel, except in the context of one day being reunited with the House of Judah, when Messiah returns. This was the manner by which the Northern Kingdom, of the House of Israel, became known to the world and themselves as Gentile.

### ~ The Physical Seed of Abraham ~

The Northern Kingdom of the House of Israel made up the far greater portion of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When they were divorced and sent away, they continued to live together in various areas where they had been resettled by the Assyrians:

**"Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ..."**  
(II Kings 18:11)

In time, the Babylonians, under king Nebuchadnezzar conquered the Assyrian Empire and created the Babylonian Empire of the Chaldeans. They were the people who took the House of Judah captive in 586 BCE. Some of those Jewish expatriates are believed to have joined with their brothers from the "lost" northern tribes and migrated away with them. Likewise, some from the House of Israel attached themselves to the Jews living in Babylon.

Eventually, the Persians, along with the Medes, defeated Babylon and Cyrus the king allowed Judah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the Temple. Some "lost tribe" historians believe that a significant number of Israelites helped the Medes and Persians to defeat Babylon. When it came time to return, a number of Jews chose to remain in Babylon. Thus, Babylon became a Jewish center clear down to the time of *Y'shua* and beyond.

The next great empire was Greek, under the leadership of Alexander the Great. He conquered Jerusalem c. 300 BCE. The Greeks were later replaced by the Romans, however Rome was never able to conquer the strong eastern empire called *Parthia*. As already pointed out, historical evidence indicates that many *Parthians* were descendants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

These people later migrated into Europe so that, in time, various Israelite tribes came to control most of Western Europe. Centuries later, their descendants became the founders of the United States. Many Lost Tribe historians believe the Anglo-Saxon people make up the main identifiable body of Lost Israel today, however, in fairness it must be pointed out that many more historians totally disagree with this view of history.

There is much more to the story of the spread of Abraham's seed throughout the world. In the process of migration, some Israelites undoubtedly intermarried and settled down with the indigenous people who were residing in the territories through which they migrated. Later on, during the Age of Discovery, thousands of Israelite descendants of the Lost Tribes sailed around the world, establishing colonies.

Even prior to that time, there were significant migrations of Israelites south into Africa, and east into Asia, clear on to the Far East where they intermarried with the indigenous people. From a 21st century genealogical standpoint, it is both feasible and probable that the vast majority of people living today carry the physical blood of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

## ~ Abraham's Math ~

Vol. I of this series (SPHLTI) contains a chapter entitled *Abraham's Math* in which the subject of the spread of Abraham's physical seed throughout the world was addressed. At this point we would like to quote extensively from that article in order to review how most people who are believed to be "Gentiles" in today's world, really may have Israelite blood. We begin with a section called *A New Approach*.

(Begin reprint from *Abraham's Math* article):

### ~ A New Approach ~

A new approach to these teachings is now being expounded by writers such as Batya Wooten (in her book *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know*) and Eddie Chumney (*Restoring the Two Houses of Israel*), as well as a number of other "Two House" or "Two Stick" teachers. In their works, Wooten and Chumney lay forth the position that the physical descendants of *Avraham* אַבְרָהָם (Ahv'-rah-hahm = Abraham #0085), *Yitzchak* יִצְחָק (Yeets-hahck' = Isaac #3327), and *Ya'acov* יַעֲקֹב (Yah-ah'-cove = Jacob #3290) may be far more widespread among the peoples of the world than just those of Anglo-Saxon stock. In fact, the "seed of Abraham" may, by this time, have become nearly universal.

The basis for this idea lies in how one interprets an early passage in Genesis:

**"I will bless those who bless you,  
And I will curse him who curses you;  
And in you all the families of the earth  
shall be blessed."** (Gen. 12:3)

Eddie Chumney interprets this crucial verse as follows:

"In Hebrew, the phrase in Genesis (*Bereishit*) 12:3 that reads in English as *"And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"* is written:

*"Ve nivrecu bekah kol mishpachot ha-adamah."*

"The Hebrew word '*nivrecu*' is translated in most English texts as '*be blessed*.' However, the usual Hebrew word for '*be blessed*' is not *nivrecu*. It is *yivrecu*. The word '*nivrecu*' is the 'niph'al' conjugation of the Hebrew word, *barak*. The Hebrew word *barak* has a deeper meaning than just 'blessed.' The simplest Hebrew meaning of the word *barak* is blessing which invokes the G-d of Israel's presence, favor or choice in a given situation. Jewish prayers (*house of Judah*) begin with the phrase, '*Baruk atah Adonai...*' which in English is '*Blessed are you, LORD...*' and reflects the idea that 'blessed' is related to being 'chosen' or 'favored' by the G-d of Israel.

"In five places in the Talmud and other Rabbinic literature, *nivrecu* is translated as '**grafted** or intermingled.' In the Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Tenakh Series*, Volume 1, page 432, it is written:

"There is ... an opinion shared by *Rashbam* [to Genesis 28:14], *Chizkuni*, *Da'as Zekeinim*, and quoted by *Tur* that the verb (*ve nivrecu*) in Genesis 12:3 is related to the root *barak* as in the Mishnaic term *mavreek* meaning to

'intermingle or **graft**.' [cf Kelaim 7:1, Sotah 43a.] As Heidenheim explains it, this interpretation is inspired by the fact that nowhere else besides here do we find *barak* in the sense of blessing in the niph'al conjugation, while in the sense of '**grafting**' it is common in that form.'

"Therefore, based upon this insight of the Hebrew language by respected Hebrew scholars within the *house of Judah* (Judaism), Genesis (*Bereishit*) 12:3 is better understood to be translated as:

*'And in thee shall all families of the earth nivrecu* [will be **grafted** or intermingled].'

"The only PHYSICAL way ALL FAMILIES of the earth would be *nivrecu* (**grafted** or intermingled) is by the seed of Abraham (*Avraham*) being assimilated into EVERY FAMILY of the earth."

(pp. 438-439 *Restoring the Two Houses of Israel*, [author's emphasis]).

### ~ Does *Nivrecu* Fly? ~

*Shaul* שָׁאוּל (Shaw-ool' = Saul (#7586) or the Apostle Paul) teaches that all Believer's are of the seed of *Avraham*:

**"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua]. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ [Messiah] have put on Christ [Messiah]. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua]. And if you are Christ's [Messiah's], then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."** (Gal. 3:26-29)

This passage is almost universally understood to mean that when one is immersed (baptized) into Messiah *Y'shua*, they become *Avraham's* seed spiritually. However, it might also be understood to mean that the very fact that a 'Gentile' becomes a Believer in *Y'shua* indicates that he may be the physical seed or descendant of *Avraham*.

The assumption behind the *Nivrecu* Theory is that all (or nearly all) people who are Believer's in *Y'shua HaMashiach*, are very likely not only the spiritual descendants of *Avraham*, but his physical descendants as well. The question that must be asked is: does this theory have a leg to stand upon, or is it all just wishful thinking?

This issue has turned into a great debate in the Messianic community, with people actually being asked to leave congregations if they take an opposing view from that of the leadership. Far better, we should learn to disagree without becoming disagreeable.

### ~ Genealogical Evidence ~

The May 2002 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine ran an interesting article on genealogy. The writer, Steve Olson, is not a genealogist himself, but has done some family research and is quite familiar with the procedures involved in tracing one's family tree.

During a visit to Ireland (one of the countries of his ancestry) Olson met a computer scientist and genealogist at



Dublin City University named Mark Humphrys. One of the discoveries Humphrys made in his research was that:

"Whenever a reliable family tree was available, almost anyone of European ancestry turned out to be descended from English royalty -- even such unlikely people as Hermann Goring and Daniel Boone. Humphrys began to think that such descent was the rule rather than the exception in the Western world, even if relatively few people had the documents to demonstrate it." (p. 62)

It is interesting to note that if one is descended from English royalty, they might also be descended from king David of Israel, for the royal family has genealogical charts showing their ancestry all the way back to David and further on to *Adam*.

### ~ Mathematical Evidence ~

According to Eliezer Shulman, in his book, *The Sequence of Events in the Old Testament*, *Avraham* was born in the year 1948 from creation (approximately 2050 BCE). His son of promise, *Yitzhak*, was born one hundred years later in 2048 from creation (approximately 1950 BCE). This places the birth of *Yitzhak* over 3900 years from the present time. Using 25 years as a generation means that today we are 158 generations removed from *Avraham*. Using 40 years per generation, still removes us nearly 100 generations.

The number of ancestors for any single person increases exponentially with each generation (two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, etc.). Going back only 40 generations yields a potential of over one trillion direct ancestors for a single individual. This number far exceeds the total number of people who have ever lived on the earth since the beginning of time.\*

With such immense numbers involved, it should come as no surprise that we are all more closely related than might have been imagined.

Steve Olson continues his article:

"The idea that virtually anyone with a European ancestor descends from English royalty seems bizarre, but it accords perfectly with some recent research done by Joseph Chang, a statistician at Yale University." ...

"In a 1999 paper titled 'Recent Common Ancestors of All Present-Day Individuals,' Chang showed how to reconcile the potentially huge number of our ancestors with the quantities of people who actually lived in the past. ...Under the conditions laid out in his paper, the most recent common ancestor of every European today (except for recent immigrants to the Continent) was someone who lived in Europe in the surprisingly recent past -- only about 600 years ago. In other words, all Europeans alive today have among their ancestors the same man or woman who lived around 1400." (pp. 63-64)

The mathematical model developed by Chang contains one assumption that can change this seemingly incredible fact. It assumes that every person in Europe, over this six hundred year period, could potentially marry any other person (of the opposite sex) in Europe. According to Olson:

"These departures from randomness must push back somewhat the date of Europeans' most recent common ancestor." (p. 64)

However, there has been a great "churning" of the peoples of the world over the last several hundred years, as European civilization spread around the world during the Age of Discovery.

"This constant churning of people makes it possible to apply Chang's analysis to the world as a whole. For example, almost everyone in the New World must be descended from English royalty -- even people of predominantly African or Native American ancestry, because of the long history of intermarriage in the Americas." (p. 64)

Olson's conclusion to the matter is that:

"the most common ancestor of all six billion people on earth today probably lived just a couple of thousand years ago." (p. 64)

*Avraham* lived nearly four thousand years ago. Surely, if this statistical model is anywhere near correct, every person on earth could conceivably be descended from him, just as the *Nivrecu* Theory suggests. Equally possible is the theory that every person on earth could be descended from the twelve sons of *Ya'acov*, the progenitors of the children of Israel.

### ~ Grafted In ~

If all of this is true, then why do the 'Gentiles' need to be "grafted in" to the Olive Tree of Israel, for it would seem they were already a part of the Olive Tree through intermarriage:

**"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew."** (Rom. 11:1-2a)

Yet, a few verses later, *Shaul* does say that some of Israel has been "cast away" while a remnant of faithful ones has been retained:

**"I say then, have they [*Israel*] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches."**

(Rom. 11:11-16)

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\* Current estimates show nearly seven billion living on earth, the largest number every recorded as far as we know, although it is possible the earth contained a population figure in the billions just prior to the Flood.

The "casting away" of Israel is only a temporary phenomena so that the world as a whole can be "reconciled." What can this possibly mean? Could it have anything to do with the "casting away" of the House of Israel through a written bill of divorcement? Is it possible that the salvation of the Gentiles might have something to do with the temporary "casting away" of the House of Israel some 750 years before the time of *Shaul*?

In Isaiah chapter five, the children of Israel are likened to a vineyard that was planted with much hope and promise, but which failed to produce good fruit:

**"Now let me sing to my Well-beloved  
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:  
My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;  
So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,  
But *it* brought forth wild grapes.**  
**'And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and  
men of Judah,  
Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.  
What more could have been done to My vineyard  
That I have not done in it?  
Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth  
*good* grapes,  
Did it bring forth *wild* grapes?  
And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My  
vineyard:  
I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;  
And break down its wall, and it shall be  
trampled down.  
I will lay it waste;  
It shall not be pruned or dug,  
But there shall come up briars and thorns.  
I will also command the clouds  
That they rain no rain on it.'**  
**For the vineyard of the LORD [YHVH] of hosts  
*is the house of Israel,*  
And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.  
He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;  
For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help."**  
(Isa. 5:1-7)

Both the House of Israel and the House of Judah failed to live up to the expectations and hopes which were invested in them when God called them out of Egypt. They brought forth "wild grapes" instead of "good fruit." Because of their wickedness, God sent both houses into captivity:

**"Therefore my people have gone into captivity,  
Because *they have no knowledge;*  
Their honorable men *are* famished,  
And their multitude dried up with thirst."** (Isa. 5:13)

Isaiah wrote his prophecies from about 740 to 680 BCE. Thus, his ministry began eighteen years prior to the captivity of

the House of Israel and extended nearly forty years after that event.

Meanwhile, the House of Judah was not taken captive until nearly one hundred years after the time of Isaiah. As of this date the House of Israel has not yet returned to the land from its captivity, although there are most certainly some in Israel who are descended from the northern ten tribes. The House of Judah, on the other hand, was not only sent into captivity and returned (during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah), they were dispersed among the nations a second time, after the destruction of the Second Temple. They began returning from that dispersion in the late nineteenth century, which culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 CE.

Nevertheless, the "lost" House of Israel will yet return to the land, along with those of the House of Judah who are still in the Diaspora:

**"He will lift up a banner [*nissi*] to the nations  
from afar,  
And will whistle to them from the end of the earth;  
Surely they shall come with speed, swiftly."** (Isa. 5:26)

What is the "banner" that will be lifted up to the nations when God "whistles" for Israel? That banner is none other than the Messiah:

**"And in that day there shall be a Root of  
Jesse [*Messiah*],  
Who shall stand as a banner [*nissi*] to the people;  
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,  
And His resting place shall be glorious.'**  
**It shall come to pass in that day  
That the LORD [YHVH] shall set His hand again  
the second time  
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,  
From Assyria and Egypt,  
From Pathros and Cush,  
From Elam and Shinar,  
From Hamath and the islands of the sea.  
He will set up a banner [*nissi*] for the nations,  
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,  
And gather together the dispersed of Judah  
From the four corners of the earth."** (Isa. 11:10-12)

Returning now to Romans chapter 11, we are better able to understand that at least a portion of the "Gentiles" who are grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel were actually the descendants of those very ones from the House of Israel and the House of Judah who had previously been cut out and cast away:

**"For if their [*Houses of Israel and Judah*] being cast away *is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?* For if the firstfruit *is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy* [*set apart*], so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you."**

(Rom. 11:15-18)

Today, the descendants of the House of Israel and even some of the descendants of the House of Judah do not know that they are of the seed of *Avraham*. They believe themselves to be Gentiles. Yet in reality, many of them may very well be descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov*.

The full restoration will occur when God removes all of the sins of His people Israel:

**"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**

**"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:**

**'The Deliverer will come out of Zion,  
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;  
For this *is* My covenant with them,  
When I take away their sins.'**

**"Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."** (Rom. 11:25-29)

God called Israel to be a nation of priests; His chosen people. He cannot and will not renege on that promise:

**""And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."** (Ex. 19:6)

Even though the children of Israel did not live up to their end of the bargain (to obey every word of God) He has still promised to uphold His end of the bargain:

**""But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD [YHVH]: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."** (Jer. 31:33)

**"And they sang a new song, saying:  
'You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
And have made us kings and priests to our God;  
And we shall reign on the earth."** (Rev. 5:9-10)

**"Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [Messiah], and shall reign with Him a thousand years."** (Rev. 20:6)

#### ~ God's Promises to the House of Israel ~

The book of Hosea is a prophecy that is addressed specifically to the House of Israel. Read the promise God has made to those whom He previously divorced:

**""Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
Will bring her into the wilderness,  
And speak comfort to her.  
I will give her vineyards from there,**

**And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;  
She shall sing there,  
As in the days of her youth,  
As in the day when she came up from the land  
of Egypt.**

**""And it shall be, in that day,'  
Says the LORD [YHVH],  
'That you will call Me "My Husband,"  
And no longer call Me "My Master,"  
For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,  
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.  
In that day I will make a covenant for them  
With the beasts of the field,  
With the birds of the air,  
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.  
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,  
To make them lie down safely.**

**""I will betroth you to Me forever;  
Yes, I will betroth you to Me  
In righteousness and justice,  
In lovingkindness and mercy;  
I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
And you shall know the LORD [YHVH].**

**""It shall come to pass in that day  
That I will answer,' says the LORD [YHVH];  
'I will answer the heavens,  
And they shall answer the earth.  
The earth shall answer  
With grain,  
With new wine,  
And with oil;  
They shall answer Jezreel [*God sows*].  
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!*""** (Hosea 2:14-23)

(End of quoted portion from *Abraham's Math* article.)

#### ~ First Century Israelites ~

It would seem that by the first century CE, all trace of the "Lost Ten Tribes" of the House of Israel would be gone. However, that was not the case. Numerous Jewish writings indicate a knowledge of the location of at least some of them, clear down into the first century CE. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* addresses this matter:

"Ten Lost Tribes -- legend concerning the fate of the ten tribes constituting the northern Kingdom of Israel. The Kingdom of Israel, consisting of the ten tribes (the twelve tribes excluding Judah and Benjamin who constituted the southern Kingdom of Judah), which fell in 722 BCE and its inhabitants were exiled to "Halah and Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (II Kings 17:6 and 18:11; ...), but in general it can be said that they

disappeared from the stage of history. ... Their place in history, however, is substituted by legend, and the legend of the Ten Lost Tribes is one of the most fascinating and persistent in Judaism and beyond it.

"The belief in the continued existence of the ten tribes was regarded as an incontrovertible fact during the whole period of the Second Temple and of the Talmud. Tobit, the hero of the apocryphal book of his name, was depicted as a member of the tribe of Naphtali; the Testament of the 12 Patriarchs takes their existence as a fact; and in his fifth vision, IV Ezra (13:34–45) saw a "peaceable multitude... these are the ten tribes which were carried away prisoners out of their own land." Josephus (Ant., 11:133) states as a fact "the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude and not to be estimated in numbers." Paul (Acts 26:6) protests to Agrippa that he is accused "for the hope of the promise made unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come," while James addresses his epistle to "the twelve tribes which are scattered about" (1:1). The only opposing voice to this otherwise universal view is found in the Mishnah. R. Eliezer expresses his view that they will eventually return and "after darkness is fallen upon the ten tribes light shall thereafter dwell upon them," but R. Akiva expresses his emphatic view that "the ten tribes shall not return again" (Sanh. 10:3).

"Their inability to rejoin their brethren was attributed to the fact that whereas the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (the Kingdom of Judah) were "scattered throughout the world," the ten tribes were exiled beyond the mysterious river Sambatyon (Gen. R. 73:6), with its rolling waters or sand and rocks, which during the six days of the week prevented them from crossing it, and though it rested on the Sabbath, the laws of the Sabbath rendered the crossing equally impossible. According to the Jerusalem Talmud, however (Sanh. 10:6, 29c), the exiles were divided into three. Only one-third went beyond the Sambatyon, a second to "Daphne of Antioch," and over the third "there descended a cloud which covered them"; but all three would eventually return." (article: *Ten Lost Tribes -- CD Version*.)

Thus we see that many first century Jewish scholars knew where at least some of the Lost Tribes were living, and expected a return and reuniting as expressed in Ezek. 37 in the joining of the two sticks.

Today, most of modern Judaism follows the teaching of Rabbi Akiva on this matter. They believe that a remnant of the Ten Tribes returned, with members of the House of Judah, from Babylon when the Temple was rebuilt and that a future return will not take place.

### ~ The Galatians ~

As noted above, the Apostle's *Ya'acov* (James) and Paul both mentioned the twelve tribes of Israel in their writings. In the case of *Ya'acov*, he said:

**"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings."**  
(James 1:1)

This greeting indicates that *Ya'acov* not only knew where some of the Lost Tribes were living, he also knew that some of them had become Believer's in *Y'shua*.

The Apostle Paul had this to say in his defense before King Agrippa:

**"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. <sup>7</sup> To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews."**  
(Acts 26:6-7)

Again, Paul must have known that among those who had accepted *Y'shua* in the Diaspora of that day, were known members of all twelve tribes. Certainly, those among the Lost Tribes who were still involved in paganism would not be included by Paul as those from the twelve tribes who were **"earnestly serving God night and day."**

Most interesting of all was the case of the *Galatians*. The following is taken from the *Hebrew Roots*® Issue 06-4 article *Background to Galatians*:

"The region called *Galatia* was a part of Asia Minor, the area which is known today as the nation of Turkey. The name *Galatia* comes from the word *Galatae* which was the Greek word for *Gaul* (the ancient name for France). The *Gauls* were a *Celtic* people (related no doubt to other *Celts* of Ireland and Wales) who invaded Asia Minor from France in 278-277 BCE, having originally come as marauding conquerors, but eventually settling in this area with their wives and children.

"The *Gauls* initially settled in north eastern *Phrygia* (the north central part of Asia Minor), where they ruled, even though they were outnumbered by the native *Phrygians*. However, in 160 BCE the *Gauls* acquired a portion of the region of *Lycaonia* to the south. This area included the cities of *Pisidian Antioch*, *Iconium*, and *Lystra* which Paul visited on his 1st Missionary Journey (c. 46-48 CE).

...

"As already mentioned, the people called the *Gauls* (from whence came the name *Galatia*) were a branch of a much larger group of *Celtic* people located in Europe. A branch of these Asia Minor *Gauls* resettled in north central Asia Minor taking control of the indigenous people then living in that area. It is generally believed this group of *Gauls* came from the area of modern day France. But where did the French *Gauls* originate?

"Historians, who have studied the movements of the so-called "Lost Tribes of Israel," trace the *Gauls* (as well as all of the *Celts*) back to a race of people called the *Cimmerians*. Late 20th century researchers have connected the *Cimmerians*, along with a companion people called the *Scythians*, with descendants from those people of the northern kingdom of Israel who were taken captive in the 8th century BCE by the *Assyrians* and transported to various locations in areas near the Black and Caspian seas.

"What this means is that, in all probability, many (but certainly not all) of the "Gentile" people living in *Galatia*, to whom Paul addressed his epistle, may well have been physical descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov* (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), whom God had banished from the Promised Land because of their pagan practices (spiritual adultery/idolatry)."

(End of quote from Issue 06-4.)

Thus we see that many of the *Galatians*, to whom Paul was writing, were really not full blooded Gentiles but most probably descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel being re-grafted back into the *Olive Tree of Israel*. They certainly looked and acted like pagan Gentiles, but God was calling them back to His fold:

**"And they also [Israel], if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"**

(Rom. 11:23-24)

#### ~ Summary ~

Today, a growing number of descendants, of the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel, are beginning to discover who they actually are as a people, through the efforts of Believing historians who have been researching this topic for many decades. For many people, this is a real revelation, discovering that so many seemingly "Gentiles" in the flesh are actually the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, just like the Jewish people.

However, it is important not to become puffed-up about this knowledge:

**"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, <sup>4</sup> nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith."**

(I Tim. 1:3-4)

Disputing about who has the more true Israelite physical lineage is not what is important:

**"But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless."**

(Titus 3:9)

What is truly important is the fact that anyone (no matter if they are classified as a Jew, an Israelite, or a full blooded Gentile) can become a Grafted-In branch of the *Olive Tree of Israel* and a member of the *Commonwealth of Israel*, thereby becoming partakers of the *Covenants of Promise*:

**"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands -- <sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ [Messiah], being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."**

(Eph. 2:11-12)

The only way all of this can be accomplished is through the acceptance of *Y'shua's* shed blood in payment for one's sins and confessing that He is the Son of God and the promised Messiah of Israel:

**"But now in Christ Jesus [Messiah *Y'shua*] you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ [Messiah]."**

(Eph. 2:13)

What is important about this discovery is how it relates to the following questions:

Are Gentile Believers in Messiah *Y'shua* expected to observe the commandments of the *Torah*, or are they free to worship God and conduct their lives as they see fit, based only upon individual or denominational interpretations of Scripture? Phrased another way; Is there but "one law" for all Messianic Believers, or are there "two laws," one for the Jew and another for the Gentile?

Are Gentile Believers even allowed to keep the commandments of the *Torah*, if they deem it proper to do so, or is observance of *Torah* commandments strictly limited to Jewish Believers?

If, in fact, many of the "Gentiles" found within Christianity are really blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- just like the Messianic Jews -- then these questions are the wrong ones to ask because they are being asked from a spirit of appeasement of mainstream Christianity, rather than obedience to God and His *Torah*. In our opinion, the question which should be asked is:

How can anyone who is a part of the children of Israel (whether Grafted-In Jew, Grafted-In Israelite, or Grafted-In Gentile), believe they are permitted to ignore the Instruction Book of God, the *Written Torah*?

*Y'shua* made two very profound statements which address this matter. The first had to do with the people to whom He was directing His message:

**"But He answered and said, 'I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"**

(Matt. 15:24)

That does not mean that real full blooded Gentiles were excluded, only that His primary focus was calling the House of Israel back into the fold.

The second statement had to do with *Y'shua's* attitude toward the *Written Torah*:

**"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [*pleroo* = to complete]. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."**

(Matt. 5:17-20)

Teachers of the Word must be very careful not to give students the impression that even the **"least of the commandments"** are unimportant and do not have to be observed.

Having said all of this, it is important to add that no one today is observing all of the commandments of the *Written Torah* (which apply to them) perfectly. This life we are living is, by the very fact that we are flesh, always a Work in Progress. New Believers should not unduly fret over their concerns about what the various commandments mean and how they are to be observed, but should, instead, step out in faith and begin to walk the walk as they understand it at this time. Once this new beginning is made, God will take Believers by their hand and guide them along the path of living life in the *Torah*.

We must all strive toward the goal of *Torah* obedience, for the *Torah* has not been made void by the sacrifice of *Y'shua*. In His own words:

**"Up to the time of Yochanan there were the *Torah* and the Prophets. Since then the Good News of the Kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is pushing to get in. <sup>17</sup> But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter in the *Torah* to become void."** (Luke 16:16-17 CJB)

Therefore all you "Gentiles," we challenge you to take up the call, repent of your sins, and return in obedience to God. Not only will you be blessed in this life, you will be richly rewarded in the next:

**"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."** (Matt. 16:27)

**"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."**

<sup>14</sup> **"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."** (Rev. 22:12-14)

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## ~ The Prophet Hosea: ~

### ~ Setting the Stage ~

Who is wise?  
Let him understand these things.  
Who is prudent?  
Let him know them.  
*Hosea 14:9*



Prophecy remains the most misunderstood portion of all Scripture. The most common belief is that prophecy was written so the student of Scripture can understand what is going to take place in the future. Some call it history written in advance. While it is true that prophecy contains information about things that are going to take place in the future, that is not the only purpose of prophecy, and perhaps, from God's point of view, it is not even the most important. This is especially true of the book written by *Hosea*, a prophet who was sent, by God, to the House of Israel prior to their captivity by the Assyrians.

*Hosea* was much more than a predictor of the future, although he certainly served effectively in that capacity. His inspired writings do more than just chronicle the events that were to transpire; they impart to the reader a sense of the frustration felt by *El Shaddai* (God Almighty) as He observed the way in which His very own wife, the House of Israel, had fallen into spiritual adultery (idolatry).

### ~ The Purpose of Prophecy ~

The main purpose of prophecy is to cause a revolution within the hearts and minds of the people; not just to warn them of their impending doom, but to turn them back to their Creator. In this regard, the prophet Jonah was perhaps the most successful of all, for his warnings to the people in the Assyrian capitol of Nineveh caused them to change their behavior and "to repent in sackcloth and ashes." Through his warnings, the Assyrian nation was spared from destruction, for a time, only later to be used by God as His rod of punishment upon both the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

**"Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger  
And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.  
I will send him against an ungodly nation,  
And against the people of My wrath  
I will give him charge,  
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,  
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets."**  
(Isa. 10:5-6)

God used Assyria twice to punish the children of Jacob (Israel); first against the northern ten tribes (House of Israel) and then against the southern tribes (House of Judah), although in the latter case the city of Jerusalem survived their siege only to be conquered many years later by the Babylonians.

One of the most highly acclaimed modern writers on prophecy is Abraham J. Heschel. In his book *The Prophets: An Introduction*, Heschel writes:

"He [*the prophet*] is a person who stands in the presence of God (Jer. 15:19), who stands 'in the council of the Lord' (Jer. 23:18), who is a participant, as it were, in the council of God, not a bearer of dispatches whose function is limited to being sent on errands. He is a counselor as well as a messenger." (p. 21).

**"Surely the Lord God does nothing  
Without revealing His secret  
To His servants the prophets."**

(Amos 3:7)

Because the prophet "stands in the council of the Lord," his words do not cease to be relevant once the predictive portion of the prophecy has come to pass. Instead, the words of the prophet stand as beacons of light heralding the very mind of God to mortal man. Thus, even fulfilled prophecy becomes timeless and has relevancy centuries later, for every generation must hear the message of *teshuvah* תשובה (teh-shoe-vah' = repentance and return), which is at the core of all prophetic utterance.

In the end, all prophecy is given for the basic reason stated by Micah, another prophet from the same era:

**"But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of  
the LORD [YHVH],  
And of justice and might,  
To declare to Jacob his transgression  
And to Israel his sin."**

(Micah 3:8)

God has chosen to have an intimate marriage relationship with the children of Israel:

**"For your Maker is your husband,  
The LORD [YHVH] of hosts is His name;  
And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel;  
He is called the God of the whole earth."** (Isa. 54:5)

Like any husband, when God's wife commits sin it bears directly on their relationship. Therefore, Israel's sins effect not only the individuals within the nation, but also the nation as a whole, plus it has an effect on God as the Husband of Israel.

Heschel comments concerning the impact of sin on this divine/human relationship:

"The prophet does not judge the people by timeless norms, but from the point of view of God. Prophecy proclaims what happened to God as well as what will happen to the people. In judging human affairs, it unfolds a divine situation. Sin is not only the violation of a law, it is as if sin were as much a loss to God as to man. God's role is not spectatorship but involvement. He and man meet mysteriously in the human deed. The prophet cannot say Man without thinking God." (p. 24).

### ~ Predicting the Future ~

Even though the primary underlying purpose of prophecy is to expose the sins of Israel and turn the hearts of the people

back to God, still the element of predicting the future does exist within prophecy and it too is relevant to a proper understanding of the prophetic books.

Here, however, the student of prophecy is often faced with a problem. What portions of the prophecy have already been fulfilled? What portions remain to be fulfilled? What portions have failed or will fail? And what portions will have multiple fulfillments; a type and an anti-type? This problem becomes very apparent when one studies the divergent views of the various prophetic teachers, for it seems as if none of them can fully agree on just what can be expected to actually take place, because each has their own interpretation.

The book of *Hosea* is no exception. Some scholars believe that all of the predictive portions given by Hosea have already been fulfilled and it exists today merely as an historical book. Meanwhile, others see major portions being applicable to the future, with some passages alluding to dual fulfillments. It is this dichotomy which draws us back again and again to the prophetic books as we seek to understand both future events and the intricate mind of our Creator.

### ~ Hosea the Prophet ~

The name *Hosea* הושיע (Hoh-shay'-ah #1954) means "welfare, salvation, deliverer." It was also the original name of the one commonly called *Joshua* (the son of *Nun*) before God changed his name to *Yahoshua* יהושע (Yah-hoh'-shoe-ah #3091), which means, "whose help is YHVH." The names, *Hosea*, *Yahoshua* (*Joshua*), and *Yeshua* are all derived from the same basic Hebrew source word; *yasha* יָשַׁע (yah-shah' #3467) which means: "to be open, wide or free, i.e. to be safe."

*Hosea's* father was named *Beeri* בְּעִירִי (Bee-ay-ree' #0882) which means "fountainhead" or "well." Thus, *Hosea* could be called "salvation from the well:"

**"Therefore with joy you will draw water  
From the wells of salvation."**

(Isa. 12:3a)

However, we must point out, in the Isaiah passage just quoted, the word translated "wells" is not *Beeri* but a more common word for water; *mayan* מַיִן (mah-yahn #4599). Nevertheless, in the Hebraic view a connection is evident because both words mean "wells of water."

It is interesting to note that the last king of the House of Israel was also named *Hosea*, and that he too was a "deliverer;" having "delivered" the northern kingdom of Israel into the hands of the Assyrians.

### ~ The Time Setting ~

The opening verse of *Hosea* tells us the time setting of his prophetic ministry:

**"The word of the LORD [YHVH] that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, 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."**

(Hosea 1:1)

Although scholars do not agree on the exact dating of the various kings of Israel and Judah, it is evident from the first verse that *Hosea* began his ministry during the reign of

*Jeroboam II*, יֵרֵבֹעַם (Yah-rahv ahm' #3379) or circa 750 BCE. The last king mentioned is *Hezekiah* הֶזְקִיָּה (Khiz kee-yah' #2396) king of Judah, whose reign began circa 725 BCE. Even though *Jeroboam II* is the only king mentioned from the Israelite king list, the fact that *Hosea* prophesied during the reign of king *Hezekiah* of Judah means that his career also extended into the reign of king *Hosea*, the last king of Israel. It is likely that the prophet *Hosea* lived to see the actual downfall and captivity of his native land; the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Hosea*, although younger, was a contemporary to *Amos* עֲמוֹס (ah-mohs' #5986) another prophet whom God sent to the northern kingdom; the House of Israel. *Hosea* would also have been an older contemporary of the prophets *Isaiah* יֵשַׁעְיָהוּ (Yehsha yah'-hoo #3470) and *Micah*, מִיכָה (Mee-kah' #4321) both of whom ministered to the southern kingdom; the House of Judah. Some speculate that when very young, *Hosea* may also have known the prophet *Jonah* יוֹנָה (Yoh-nah' #3124).

### ~ The International Situation ~

When *Hosea* began to prophecy, the kingdom of Israel was living in luxury and was at the peak of its power. At that time no one would have thought that such a great nation would, in the space of about 25-30 years, be totally defeated and have all of its population deported from their homeland to a far off country.

The primary adversary to the kingdom of Israel was Assyria, which had become, by the time of the prophet *Hosea*, a formidable empire. Assyria was an ancient kingdom which began to ascend to regional power in the ninth century during the reign of *Shalmaneser III* (859-825 BCE) שַׁלְמַנְאֶסֶר (Shal mahn eh'-sehr #8022). At that time a coalition of kings (including king *Ahab* אֲחָאב (Ahkh ahv' #0256) of Israel) allied themselves with Syria and successfully resisted *Shalmaneser III*'s bid to gain control of that region.

However, according to Assyrian records, less than twenty years later king *Jehu* יְהוּא (Yay-hoo' #3058) of Israel was paying tribute money to *Shalmaneser III*. This record was found on a seven foot high stone called the 'Black Obelisk,' discovered when the ruins of *Nineveh* נִינְוֶה (Neen neh-vay') were excavated by archaeologists in 1845-49. One of the entries on the Black Obelisk is the depiction of a king, with Israelite features, kneeling at the feet of king *Shalmaneser III*. Above this picture the following inscription is found:

"The tribute of Jehu, son (successor) of Omri, silver, gold, bowls of gold, chalices of gold, cups of gold, vases of gold, lead, sceptre for the king, and spear-shafts, I have received." (from *Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 206).

It is believed this tribute was paid to *Shalmaneser III* on Mount Carmel.

The conquered nations had little trouble with Assyria as long as they paid the required tribute money in a timely manner. However, since the Assyrian army did not occupy the nation of Israel there was temptation to skip the required payment from time to time, especially when internal strife within Assyria began to weaken its power.

However, all of this changed about 745 BCE when *Tiglath-Pileser III* תִּגְלַת פִּלְאֶסֶר (Tig'-laht Peel eh'-sehr #8407) ascended to the Assyrian throne. He made a number of administrative changes aimed at strengthening Assyrian authority over the vassal states (including Israel). It was just prior to and during *Tiglath-Pileser III*'s reign that *Hosea* was sent, by God, to prophecy the downfall of the House of Israel.

### ~ Studying the Book of Hosea ~

There are different ways in which the Book of *Hosea* can be studied. The most common is to begin at the beginning and end at the end. However, there is another approach. The book of *Hosea* is divided into two major divisions. The first division consists of the first three chapters and primarily deals with the personal life of *Hosea* (although all of the recorded events that take place in *Hosea*'s life are definitely prophetic and directly related to God's relationship with the House of Israel).

The second division begins in chapter four and goes to the end of the book. It contains the bulk of the direct prophetic utterances concerning the House of Israel's relationship with her Husband, God.

Interspersed throughout the book are brief references to the House of Judah. These short exclamations about Judah serve to make it clear that the bulk of the prophecies contained in the book apply solely to the northern kingdom, the House of Israel. Most of the time, the references to Judah are in the form of warnings, so that the people of the House of Judah will watch their step as well. Occasionally, a reference to Judah contrasts their faithfulness to God and the *Torah*, as opposed to Israel's constant unfaithfulness. These positive assertions may be indicators as to when those particular passages were written.

Also apparent in this section is what might be termed God's ambivalent attitude toward the House of Israel. One minute He is telling them that, because of their sins, they are to be sent away never to return. Then a few verses later God is indicating that He will take them back (at some future time), clean them up and forgive them of their sins. Abraham Heschel calls this "tension between anger and compassion."

In order to see the full picture concerning the sins of the House of Israel and their estranged relationship to God, we will first study *The Relationship of God With Israel* (found in chapters 4-14). Then we will go back to study *The Relationship of Hosea With Gomer* (found in chapters 1-3), and see how God directed *Hosea*'s life, making it a prophetic image of His very own relationship with the House of Israel. In this manner we will be able to see the full spectrum of God's intentions for the 'Lost Tribes' of the House of Israel.

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**And they have played the harlot against their God.  
They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops,  
And burn incense on the hills,  
Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths,  
Because their shade is good.  
Therefore your daughters commit harlotry,  
And your brides commit adultery."** (Hosea 4:12-13)

It is here, in the middle of the indictment concerning idolatry (spiritual adultery), that God first uses the name *Ephraim*,\* אֶפְרַיִם (Ehf rah-yeem' #0669) which is perhaps His most tender term for the House of Israel:

**"Ephraim is joined to idols,  
Let him alone.  
Their drink is rebellion,  
They commit harlotry continually.  
Her rulers dearly love dishonor.  
The wind has wrapped her up in its wings,  
And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices."** (Hosea 4:17-19)

### ~ Israel's Judgment ~

What follows in Chapter 5 is a passage in which God threatens to bring His judgment upon the children of Israel. While this prophecy is primarily focused upon the northern kingdom (the House of Israel), the southern kingdom (the House of Judah) also receives its share of condemnation. It is as though God is saying to Judah: "Look and see what I am going to do to your sister Israel and be warned that the very same thing can happen to you if you continue in your sins."

Nevertheless, the primary recipient of this judgment is the House of Israel. This is made clear from the very first verse, where all levels of society are condemned, from the highest to the lowest:

**"Hear this, O priests!  
Take heed, O house of Israel!  
Give ear, O house of the king!  
For yours is the judgment, ..."** (Hosea 5:1a)

Throughout the text God continues to refer to the House of Israel by the name *Ephraim*, because they are the chief tribe of the northern kingdom. Once again, the primary charge for which the judgment is being brought is harlotry (spiritual adultery) which is idolatry:

**"I know Ephraim,  
And Israel is not hidden from Me;  
For now, O Ephraim, you commit harlotry;  
Israel is defiled.  
They do not direct their deeds  
Toward turning to their God,  
For the spirit of harlotry is in their midst,  
And they do not know the LORD [YHVH]."** (Hosea 5:3-4)

\* The following names are used in Scripture to refer to the northern ten tribes: The House of Israel, Ephraim, Samaria, Joseph, and Aholah.

Ephraim was the chief tribe of the ten, Samaria was the capitol of Israel and Joseph was the progenitor of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Aholah was a special name (Judah was called Aholibah) used only in Ezekiel 23.

By indicating that the House of Israel did not "direct their deeds toward turning to their God," God testified that a major part of their problem was pride. They just did not want to humble themselves and admit that what they had been doing all those years was wrong:

**"The pride of Israel testifies to his face;  
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in  
their iniquity; ..."** (Hosea 5:5a)

Incidentally, the House of Judah is also mentioned as being prideful, therefore a warning was issued to them as well:

**"Judah also stumbles with them."** (Hosea 5:5b)

God was so angry with the House of Israel that He chose to withdraw Himself from their presence because of their unfaithfulness to Him, for their adultery caused their offspring to become like pagans, not knowing the God of Israel:

**"With their flocks and herds  
They shall go to seek the LORD [YHVH],  
But they will not find Him;  
He has withdrawn Himself from them.  
They have dealt treacherously with the LORD [YHVH],  
For they have begotten pagan children.  
Now a New Moon shall devour them and  
their heritage."** (Hosea 5:6-7)

God issued His decree to punish Israel for her sins so that it would be heard among all the tribes of the children of Israel:

**"Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke;  
Among the tribes of Israel I make known what  
is sure."** (Hosea 5:9)

In addition, God wanted Judah to know that she was not blameless, and that her time for punishment would come:

**"The princes of Judah are like those who remove a  
landmark;  
I will pour out my wrath on them like water."** (Hosea 5:10)

This does not mean that Judah actually removed boundary markers, but rather they would be cursed in the same fashion as those who do (Deut. 27:17).

Meanwhile, *Ephraim* was judged because he had, in the words of the *Tanakh* (the Jewish Publication Society version of the Hebrew Scriptures), "witlessly gone after futility:"

**"Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment,  
Because he willingly walked by human precept."** (Hosea 5:11 TNK)

Both houses of Israel were told they would suffer because of their transgressions:

**"Therefore I will be to Ephraim like a moth,  
And to the house of Judah like rottenness. ...  
For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,  
And like a young lion to the house of Judah.  
I, even I, will tear them and go away;  
I will take them away, and no one shall rescue."** (Hosea 5:12, 14)

Although Ephraim thought he could escape the promised punishment by forming an alliance with Assyria, this effort was programmed for failure, as it is written:

**"When Ephraim saw his sickness,  
And Judah saw his wound,  
Then Ephraim went to Assyria  
And sent to King Jareb;  
Yet he cannot cure you,  
Nor heal you of your wound."** (Hosea 5:13)

~ Future Restoration ~

Interspersed throughout these prophecies of doom stand passages of hope. For God was not promising the annihilation of Israel, rather only their punishment. This was not the case of an angry father casting a son completely out of his family. This was the case of a Righteous Father taking the necessary steps to insure that His son would eventually return to Him in true repentance. In the meantime, God promised to wait patiently for their *teshuvah* (teh-shoe-vah' = repentance and return):

**"I will return again to My place  
Till they acknowledge their offense.  
Then they will seek My face;  
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."** (Hosea 5:15)

What follows is a passage of great importance in which *Ephraim* is prophesied to eventually realize his transgressions and come to repentance before God. It is our opinion that this day has not yet arrived, but when it does come, *Ephraim* will return with confidence to *HaShem* knowing that He will accept their repentance. Then the children of the House of Israel will once again experience a close loving relationship with *YHVH* like they had when He first brought them out of Egypt:

**"Come, and let us return to the LORD [YHVH];  
For He has torn, but He will heal us;  
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.  
After two days He will revive us;  
On the third day He will raise us up,  
That we may live in His sight.  
Let us know,  
Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD [YHVH].  
His going forth is established as the morning;  
He will come to us like the rain,  
Like the latter and former rain to the earth."** (Hosea 6:1-3)

The phrase "after two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up," may well be a direct reference to the first resurrection, which is prophesied to occur when Messiah *Y'shua* returns to establish His kingdom on earth:

**"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [Messiah], and shall reign with Him a thousand years."** (Rev. 20:6)

The ancient tradition of the Jews is that man's time on earth will total seven thousand years, with each one thousand year period being likened to one prophetic day. In this

scenario, *Y'shua HaMashiach* came to earth in human flesh at the end of the fourth day. At that time, He was crucified, buried, and resurrected. He then ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father, and is expected to return after two days (two thousand years) are completed, in order to set up His kingdom (the one thousand year millennial reign) on the third day.

~ Covenant Transgression ~

The next brief section was a lament by God concerning the continual transgression of the covenant relationship the twelve tribes had accepted at Mount Sinai. Their small measure of faithfulness was likened to the dew which disappears shortly after the morning sun appears:

**"O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?  
O Judah, what shall I do to you?  
For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud,  
And like the early dew it goes away.  
... like men they transgressed the covenant;  
There they dealt treacherously with Me."** (Hosea 6:4, 7)

This passage is quite remarkable in that God allows us to see directly and deeply into His feelings for Israel and Judah. By revealing His innermost longings, we are enabled to relate directly to the situation that existed between the children of Israel and their Husband. It also allows us to see how God feels about each one of us individually, when we turn aside from His *Torah* and commit sin, for it is written:

**"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law:  
for sin is the transgression of the law."** (I John 3:4 KJV)

God continued His lament by telling the people what He desired from them. The message is just as relevant for us today as it was in the time of *Hosea*:

**"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,  
And the knowledge of God more than  
burnt offerings."** (Hosea 6:6)

The *Tanakh* renders this verse thusly:

**"For I desire goodness, not sacrifice;  
Obedience to God, rather than burnt offerings."** (Hosea 6:6 TNK)

Obedience to the *Torah* negated the need for sacrifice, for it was when sin was committed that an offering had to be brought to the altar:

**"Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done something against any of the commandments of the LORD [YHVH] in anything which should not be done, and are guilty; when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting."** (Lev. 4:13-14)

God mentioned specifically that it was their sin of harlotry which separated the House of Israel from their Creator:

**"I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel:  
There is the harlotry of Ephraim;  
Israel is defiled."** (Hosea 6:10)

The very first *mitzvah* (commandment) that *HaShem* gave to the children of Israel after the ten commandments were issued, dealt specifically with their absolute need to stay far away from idolatry:

**"Then the LORD [YHVH] said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be with Me -- gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.'"** (Ex. 20:22-23)

### ~ Israel Refused to Repent ~

Despite God's calling to the House of Israel to repent and return, they continued to ignore His cry. The more He called to them, the more their sins came to light:

**"When I would have healed Israel,  
Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered,  
And the wickedness of Samaria.\*  
For they have committed fraud;  
A thief comes in;  
A band of robbers takes spoil outside.  
They do not consider in their hearts  
That I remember all their wickedness;  
Now their own deeds have surrounded them;  
They are before My face."** (Hosea 7:1-2)

What follows are a series of analogies in which the heart of the House of Israel is compared to various objects: such as an oven, a cake, and a dove. The purpose here is to convey the foolishness of the heart of Israel, and how God is able to see clear through all of their attempts to hide their sins or escape their punishment:

**"They are all adulterers.  
Like an oven heated by a baker --  
He ceases stirring the fire after kneading the dough,  
Until it is leavened.  
...  
They are all hot, like an oven,  
And have devoured their judges;  
All their kings have fallen.  
None among them calls upon Me."** (Hosea 7:4, 7)

The reference to their kings having fallen is probably in regard to the quick succession of kings that took place after the death of *Jeroboam II*.

**"They set up kings, but not by Me;  
They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them."** (Hosea 8:4a)

The first successor to *Jeroboam II* was his son *Zechariah* זְכַרְיָה (Zeh-kahr yah' #2148) who reigned only six months. He was murdered by *Shallum* שְׁלֹמֻם (Shah-loom' #7967) the son

of *Jabesh* יָבֵשׁ (Yah-baysh' #3003). However, *Shallum* was only in office for one month when *Menahem* מְנַחֵם (Meh nah'-khaym #4505) son of *Gadi* גָּדִי (Gah-dee' #1424) killed him and began a ten year reign. However, *Menahem* was just as evil in God's sight as were all of his predecessors:

**"And he did evil in the sight of the LORD [YHVH]; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin."** (II Kings 15:18)

It is a well understood principle that the general character of the people of a nation tends to mirror that of their leaders. If the leaders are righteous, the people tend to follow, if the leaders are wicked, so the people tend to be also. Thus, the wickedness of the kings of Israel filtered down to many of the common people.

The next issue which God brought against the House of Israel was the fact that they had mixed themselves with the Gentiles of the land, whom they had originally been instructed to chase out of the country:

**"They did not destroy the peoples,  
Concerning whom the LORD [YHVH] had  
commanded them,  
But they mingled with the Gentiles  
And learned their works;  
They served their idols,  
Which became a snare to them."** (Psalm 106:34-36)

If this was true during the times of the Psalmists, it was even more true during the last days of the House of Israel:

**"Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples;  
Ephraim is a cake unturned."** (Hosea 7:8)

The sense of this passage is that Ephraim is incapable of "turning" himself. In other words, he cannot bring himself to turn and come back to *YHVH*.

The string of analogies is completed when God compares Israel to a "silly dove:"

**"Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without sense --  
They call to Egypt,  
They go to Assyria."** (Hosea 7:11)

No matter if Ephraim changed kings like soiled clothing, or went to Assyria and Egypt seeking protection, he could not escape the will of the One who established him as a nation in the first place:

**"Wherever they go,  
I will spread My net on them;  
I will bring them down like birds of the air;  
I will chastise them  
According to what their congregation has heard."** (Hosea 7:12)

Once again, *YHVH* laments the condition of His dear son, *Ephraim*:

**"Woe to them, for they have fled from Me!  
Destruction to them,  
Because they have transgressed against Me!  
Though I redeemed them,**

\*Samaria was the capitol city of the northern kingdom and is another way in which the House of Israel is referenced in prophecy.

**Yet they have spoken lies against Me.  
They did not cry out to Me with their heart  
When they waited upon their beds."** (Hosea 7:13-14a)

Fickle *Ephraim* refused to turn to the One who could save him. Instead, he insisted on making alliances with the heathen nations of his area, thinking that would buy him protection.

~ Willful Idolatry ~

Idolatry has always been forbidden for the children of Israel:

**"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD [YHVH] God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD [YHVH] your God which I command you. ...**

**"Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD [YHVH] spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth.**

**"And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD [YHVH] your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. But the LORD [YHVH] has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day."** (Deut. 4:1-2, 15-20)

Today, many of the people who practice idolatry believe that it is a perfectly natural way to worship their gods. However, this was never the case with Israel and Judah. They were instructed right from the beginning of their relationship with the God of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov*, that idolatry was the most evil of all sins which they could commit against their Husband and Creator.

Despite all of the warnings, the House of Israel willfully continued in their idolatrous practices throughout their history. In Scripture, this idolatry of the children of Israel is likened to a wife committing adultery. There are few actions which can harm a marriage relationship as does adultery; becoming *echad* **אֶחָד** (eh-khahd' #0259 = one) flesh with a person outside of marriage. However, this is exactly what happens spiritually every time an Israelite practices idolatry. It is the most grievous of all sins and it causes great pain to our Husband, *YHVH*.

It should come as no surprise that God used the prophet *Hosea* to clearly tell the House of Israel that their willful idolatry was an absolute affront to Him and that it would not go unpunished:

**"From their silver and gold  
They made idols for themselves --  
That they might be cut off.  
Your calf is rejected, O Samaria!  
My anger is aroused against them --  
How long until they attain to innocence?  
For from Israel is even this:  
A workman made it, and it is not God;  
But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces."** (Hosea 8:4b-6)

Because the kingdom of Israel refused to forsake their idolatry and went instead to the Gentile nation of Assyria for protection, God determined to scatter them among the Gentile nations as their punishment. There they would be surrounded by the pagan idols they so loved until their time of punishment was completed:

**"Israel is swallowed up;  
Now they are among the Gentiles  
Like a vessel in which is no pleasure.  
For they have gone up to Assyria,  
Like a wild donkey alone by itself;  
Ephraim has hired lovers.  
Yes, though they have hired among the nations,  
Now I will gather them;  
And they shall sorrow a little,  
Because of the burden of the king of princes."** (Hosea 8:8-10)

Thus, *Ephraim* was required to endure his punishment as a people lost among the Gentile nations. This would not have been necessary if they had followed the precepts laid down in God's Instruction Book for mankind -- the *Torah*:

**"I have written for him the great things of My law,  
But they were considered a strange thing."** (Hosea 8:12)

The Hebrew word rendered "law" is *Torah* **תּוֹרָה** (Toh-rah' #8451). A better translation would be "instruction." One of the primary characteristics of the House of Israel has always been their total unwillingness to follow the *Torah* -- God's instruction book. However, this is not the case with the House of Judah, who has not only followed the *Torah*, but has even added fences (additional rules) to it for increased protection.

One way in which the House of Israel can be identified today is to look for a people who have a zeal for God but refuse to put aside their pagan practices and accept the *Torah* as binding on their lives.

The northern kingdom of Israel certainly had a strong religious streak to it. They built numerous altars thinking they were worshipping the God of their fathers by offering sacrifices for sin on them. However, these altars, and the sacrifices offered on them, were not acceptable to God:

**"Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin,  
They have become for him altars for sinning.  
For the sacrifices of My offerings they sacrifice flesh  
and eat it,  
But the LORD [YHVH] does not accept them.  
Now He will remember their iniquity and punish  
their sins.**

**They shall return to Egypt.**" (Hosea 8:11, 13)

~ Dispersion ~

Because of their collective sins, the House of Israel was prophesied to be sent into captivity and prohibited from dwelling in the "Lord's land" any longer. Symbolically this was as though they were being sent back to Egypt -- back into slavery:

**"They shall not dwell in the LORD's [YHVH's] land,  
But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,  
And shall eat unclean things in Assyria."** (Hosea 9:3)

All of the incorrect religious observances dedicated to YHVH by the House of Israel were prophesied to come to an end:

**"They shall not offer wine offerings to  
the LORD [YHVH],  
Nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him.  
It shall be like bread of mourners to them;  
All who eat it shall be defiled.  
For their bread shall be for their own life;  
It shall not come into the house of the LORD."**  
(Hosea 9:4)

For:

**"The days of punishment have come;  
The days of recompense have come.  
Israel knows!  
...  
He will remember their iniquity;  
He will punish their sins."**  
(Hosea 9:7, 9b)

~ Barrenness ~

The next section begins with a brief soliloquy in which HaShem remembers what Israel was like when He first found her and brought her out of the land of Egypt:

**"I found Israel  
Like grapes in the wilderness;  
I saw your fathers  
As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season."**  
(Hosea 9:10a)

However, the fondness of that memory is quickly forgotten when HaShem remembers Israel's sin at Baal Peor, where the people committed fornication before the idols of the women of Moab (Num 25:1-3):

**"But they went to Baal Peor,  
And separated themselves to that shame;  
They became an abomination like the thing  
they loved."**  
(Hosea 9:10b)

Idolatry makes the idolater just like the idol. Because of their love affair with idols and the practices that went with their worship, God decreed a period of barrenness for the people of the House of Israel:

**"As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like  
a bird --**

**No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception!**

**Give them, O LORD [YHVH] --**

**What will You give?**

**Give them a miscarrying womb**

**And dry breasts!"** (Hosea 9:11, 14)

Finally, their fate would be to become wanderers throughout the nations, scattered about to the four corners of the earth:

**"My God will cast them away,  
Because they did not obey Him;  
And they shall be wanderers among the nations."**  
(Hosea 9:17)

~ Destruction ~

The last punishment which the House of Israel was prophesied to receive was the complete destruction of all the altars and high places where they committed their spiritual adultery (idolatry). These places were the beautiful cathedrals of their day. Fine workmanship had gone into building them and they were the pride of Ephraim:

**"He will break down their altars;  
He will ruin their sacred pillars."** (Hosea 10:2b)

There was also prophesied to be much distress and wailing among the people when the Assyrians began to destroy their "sacred" temples:

**"The inhabitants of Samaria fear  
Because of the calf of Beth Aven.  
For its people mourn for it,  
And its priests shriek for it --  
Because its glory has departed from it.  
The idol also shall be carried to Assyria  
As a present for King Jareb.  
Ephraim shall receive shame,  
And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel."**  
(Hosea 10:5-6)

Israel would not only lose her high places, she would also lose her line of kings:

**"As for Samaria, her king is cut off  
Like a twig on the water.  
Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel,  
Shall be destroyed.  
The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars;  
They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!"  
And to the hills, "Fall on us!"**" (Hosea 10:7-8)

Despite all the prophesied gloom and doom, God still had plans for his people, both the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Based on the following passage, as translated in the Tanakh, it appears as though God intended to use the captivity of the House of Israel as a tool for bringing the message about Him and His way of life to the Gentiles of the world:

**"When I chose them, I broke them in,  
Harnessing them for two furrows.  
Ephraim became a trained heifer,  
But preferred to thresh;**

**I placed a yoke  
Upon her sleek neck.  
I will make Ephraim do advance plowing;  
Judah shall do [main] plowing!  
Jacob shall do final plowing!"** (Hosea 10:10-11 TNK)

A possible interpretation of this passage, based on our vantage point today, is that the House of Israel (*Ephraim*) would be sent out to do the advance work of spreading the gospel, while the House of Judah would follow up by teaching the *Torah*. However, the completion of that work will not take place until the two houses (of Jacob) once again come together to do the final work of spreading the good news that Messiah *Y'shua* fulfilled the *Torah* by living a sinless life and dying for our sins, setting us free from idolatry so that we may once again take on the task of learning the mind of God by studying and obeying the *Torah*.

God's instruction then follows:

**"Sow for yourselves righteousness;  
Reap in mercy;  
Break up your fallow ground,  
For *it is time to seek the LORD* [YHVH],  
Till He comes and rains righteousness on you."**  
(Hosea 10:12)

~ God's Love Never Fails ~

After all these predictions of trial and suffering, God took time out to once again console His people Israel. No, He will not utterly destroy them. No, He will not let them forever disappear among the Gentiles, even though they might not know for a time exactly who they really are. Yes, He will take them back in His arms like a Husband taking back the wayward wife whom He loves.

These pictures of love found in the eleventh chapter of the Book of *Hosea* are some of the most beautiful renderings of Scripture telling us just how much God really loves the people He chose to be His own:

**"When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
And out of Egypt I called My son.  
...  
I taught Ephraim to walk,  
Taking them by their arms;  
But they did not know that I healed them.  
I drew them with gentle cords,  
With bands of love,  
And I was to them as those who take the yoke  
from their neck.  
I stooped and fed them."** (Hosea 11:1, 2-3)

Because of His eternal love for Israel, God determined not to send them back into the slavery typified by Egypt, but to let them go to Assyria where they eventually would be set free to move on into other parts of the world as previously prophesied:

**"He shall not return to the land of Egypt;  
But the Assyrian shall be his king,  
Because they refused to repent."** (Hosea 11:5)

We can feel His emotion as *HaShem* contemplates how much He loves *Ephraim* and how He cannot bear to see them utterly destroyed like *Admah* אֲדָמָה (Ahd-mah' #0126) and *Zebaiim* זִבְאִים (Tzeh boh-yeem' #6636), cities that were annihilated with *Sodom* סֹדֶם (Seh dohm' #5467) and *Gomorrah* עֲמֹרָה (Ah moh-rah' #6017):

**"How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I set you like Zebaiim?  
My heart churns within Me;  
My sympathy is stirred.  
I will not execute the fierceness of My anger;  
I will not again destroy Ephraim.  
For I am God, and not man,  
The Holy One in your midst;  
And I will not come with terror."** (Hosea 11:8-9)

The next passage indicates that eventually the dispersion of the House of Israel into the nations of the world will come to an end, and they will return to the Promised Land. This will occur when *Ephraim* begins to follow after the ways of God, letting Him lead them as a roaring Lion in the face of their enemies:

**"They shall walk after the LORD [YHVH].  
He will roar like a lion.  
When He roars,  
Then His sons shall come trembling from the west;  
They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt,  
Like a dove from the land of Assyria.  
And I will let them dwell in their houses,'  
Says the LORD [YHVH]."** (Hosea 11:10-11)

Notice the direction from which the House of Israel returns. It is from the west, a direction totally opposite from that to which they were taken captive. This cannot be a reference to ancient Assyria, for it lay to the north and east of Israel and was never associated with lands to the west of Israel. Once again we are given a hint of what yet lies in the future, for the House of Israel has not yet returned to the land of Israel; only the House of Judah has returned as of this writing. Yet the day will come when the House of Israel will also come back into the land they left over 2500 years ago, and they will come from the WEST!

This section ends with an affirmation of the House of Judah, for at the time of the writing of this passage she had remained faithful:

**"Ephraim has encircled Me with lies,  
And the house of Israel with deceit;  
But Judah still walks with God,  
Even with the Holy One who is faithful."**  
(Hosea 11:12)

This affirmation of Judah's faithfulness was probably written near the very end of *Hosea's* ministry, after *Hezekiah* had become king of Judah:

**"Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. And he did what was right in**

**the sight of the LORD [YHVH], according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image ...**

**"He trusted in the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the LORD [YHVH]; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD [YHVH] had commanded Moses."** (II Kings 18:1, 3-6)

~ Sin Continued ~

Chapter 12 begins with God recalling how *Ephraim's* father, Jacob, had to go through many years of trial before he was qualified to be considered one of the three Patriarchs. The *Tanakh* version expresses it clearly:

**"The LORD [YHVH] once indicted Judah  
And punished Jacob for his conduct,  
Requited him for his deeds."** (Hosea 12:3 TNK)

The implication is that just as *Ya'acov* (Jacob) was punished for his wrong deeds during his lifetime, so the House of Israel would also be punished for the evil deeds which they had committed during the time they were a nation. Then came God's plea:

**"So you, by the help of your God, return;  
Observe mercy and justice,  
And wait on your God continually."** (Hosea 12:6)

But *Ephraim* was prophesied to continue on his merry way, not changing his manner of dealing with his brethren; believing that he could cheat others in the marketplace and call it legitimate business:

**"A cunning Canaanite [*or merchant*]!  
Deceitful scales are in his hand;  
He loves to oppress.  
And Ephraim said,  
"Surely I have become rich,  
I have found wealth for myself;  
In all my labors  
They shall find in me no iniquity that is sin.""** (Hosea 12:7-8)

Throughout his history, *Ephraim* has provoked God through his continual sinning:

**"Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly;  
Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his bloodshed upon him,  
And return his reproach upon him."** (Hosea 12:14)

Initially, *Ephraim* was humble and teachable. However, his first sin (a most grievous one) occurred at *Baal Peor*, when the children of Israel were seduced by the women of Moab into committing sexual sins as a part of their pagan worship:

**"When Ephraim spoke, trembling,  
He exalted himself in Israel;  
But when he offended through Baal worship, he died."** (Hosea 13:1)

They should have learned their lesson at that time, but they did not and things only got worse:

**"Now they sin more and more,  
And have made for themselves molded images,  
Idols of their silver, according to their skill;  
All of it is the work of craftsmen.  
They say of them,  
"Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!""** (Hosea 13:2)

Once again, God tells them that their fate involves being scattered about the earth like chaff before the wind:

**"Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud  
And like the early dew that passes away,  
Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor  
And like smoke from a chimney."** (Hosea 13:3)

The reason the House of Israel forgot their God and Husband is because life had become too easy for them:

**"When they had pasture, they were filled;  
They were filled and their heart was exalted;  
Therefore they forgot Me."** (Hosea 13:6)

Because they forgot God, He determined to destroy them as a nation, but not as a people:

**"So I will be to them like a lion;  
Like a leopard by the road I will lurk;  
I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs;  
I will tear open their rib cage,  
And there I will devour them like a lion.  
The wild beast shall tear them.  
O Israel, you are destroyed,  
But your help is from Me.  
I will be your King; ..."** (Hosea 13:7-10a)

The hope of the House of Israel is not just in a future revival of her people, but it also includes something even more profound, the resurrection of her people from their graves:

**"I will ransom them from the power of the grave;  
I will redeem them from death.  
O Death, I will be your plagues!  
O Grave, I will be your destruction!  
Pity is hidden from My eyes."** (Hosea 13:14)

*YHVH* will have no pity upon death or the grave. He will overcome both of them when He raises up His people Israel.

~ Israel Restored ~

After all of the many pages in which God bewailed the sinful condition of the people of the House of Israel, He inspired Hosea to conclude the book with an expression of joy at their coming restoration. This restoration requires that the children of Israel recognize their many offenses, especially in the area of idolatry (spiritual adultery), turn from those offenses, and call on their Husband to forgive them completely and totally. Such a step is considered, by God, to be a worthy sacrifice, a sacrifice of one's own lips:



**"O Israel, return to the LORD [YHVH] your God,  
 For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;  
 Take words with you,  
 And return to the LORD [YHVH].  
 Say to Him,  
 "Take away all iniquity;  
 Receive *us* graciously,  
 For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.  
 Assyria shall not save us,  
 We will not ride on horses,  
 Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands,  
 "You are our gods."  
 For in You the fatherless finds mercy.'" (Hosea 14:1-3)**

With repentance comes the realization that the only way to salvation is through YHVH, the God of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov*; the God of our fathers. Idols do not save and neither does the protection of other nations.

When the House of Israel has turned from their sins and returned to *HaShem*, then God's fury will pass and the final reconciliation between the righteous Husband and His wayward wife will take place:

**"I will heal their backsliding,  
 I will love them freely,  
 For My anger has turned away from him.  
 I will be like the dew to Israel;  
 He shall grow like the lily,  
 And lengthen his roots like Lebanon.  
 His branches shall spread;  
 His beauty shall be like an olive tree,  
 And his fragrance like Lebanon  
 Those who dwell under his shadow shall return;  
 They shall be revived *like* grain,  
 And grow like a vine.  
 Their scent *shall be* like the wine of Lebanon."**

(Hosea 14:4-7)

In that day *Ephraim* will no longer look to idols:

**"Ephraim shall say,  
 "What have I to do anymore with idols?"  
 I have heard and observed him.  
 I am like a green cypress tree;  
 Your fruit is found in Me."**

(Hosea 14:8)

## ~ Summary ~

The House of Israel has been a nation of idolaters, steeped in the sins of the flesh. From almost the very beginning of their marriage, at Mount Sinai, they fell into spiritual adultery (idolatry) first with the golden calf and then at *Baal Peor*.

Despite all of the care which their Husband gave them, they preferred the practices of paganism. But God is patient and merciful. He was willing to wait until their sins had reached their fullness before finally taking direct action by bringing the nation of Assyria against them. At that time the entire House of Israel was taken captive and removed from the Promised Land into a land which they did not know and had never before seen:

**"In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."**

(II Kings 17:6)

In their place were brought people from other nations which Assyria had also conquered. Those people became known as the Samaritans of *Y'shua's* day:

**"Then the king of Assyria brought *people* from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities."**

(II Kings 17:24)

As of this date the House of Israel has not returned to the Promised Land. Yet, as we saw at the conclusion of the Book of *Hosea*, God's promise to the House of Israel is to bring them back into the land of promise. In the meantime there have been over 2500 years during which the House of Israel has been "lost" to history and the historians.

To understand the overall concept of what God is doing with the House of Israel, we will need to explore the first three chapters of the Book of *Hosea*, where we will learn the prophetic implications of *Hosea's* marriage relationship with his wife *Gomer*. That is the subject of the next chapter, *Fulfilling Love*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



is also questionable. Some claim the children of Israel were steeped in idolatry in Egypt, while others believe they were shielded from the Egyptian forms of worship because they lived apart in the land of *Goshen* גֹּשֶׁן (Goh'-shen #1657).

Whatever the case, whether *Gomer* was an actual harlot prior to marriage or whether she was merely predisposed to become a harlot, the fact of the matter is, she did play the harlot at some point after her marriage to *Hosea*.

The name *Gomer* is unusual in that most commentators do not see any prophetic significance to it. The literal meaning of the word (according to Strong's), is "complete." Her father's name was *Dibblaim* דִּבְלַיִם (Deeb lah-yeem' #1691) which means "two cakes." The *Jewish Encyclopedia* interprets these two names allegorically to mean: "destruction in consequence of idolatry." They equate the name *Dibblaim* to be "cakes of figs," used in idolatrous worship. Still another interpretation of the name *Gomer* is "a burning coal." This could be an indirect reference to an admonition given in Proverbs:

**"Can a man take fire to his bosom,  
And his clothes not be burned?  
Can one walk on hot coals,  
And his feet not be seared?  
So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife;  
Whoever touches her shall not be innocent."**

(Prov. 6:27-29)

It is important to note that the purpose of *Hosea's* marriage to *Gomer* was to act out the way the relationship between *YHVH* and the House of Israel had progressed from the beginning and how it would progress in the future:

**"For the land has committed great harlotry  
By departing from the LORD [YHVH]."** (Hosea 1:2b)

The harlotry of *Gomer* is pertinent because it pictures the harlotry that God endured during His six-hundred year marriage to the House of Israel. Although the House of Judah is also mentioned from time to time, it is more in the manner of warnings that she watch and see what is being done to Israel and not make the same mistake.

### ~ The Children ~

The marriage of *Hosea* and *Gomer* produced three children. Each child was given a special name which had profound significance to the prophecies that were being laid upon the House of Israel through the words of their father *Hosea*. The names of these children continue to have significance even today, since the final fulfillment of many of the prophecies in this book are yet future to our day.

The firstborn child to *Hosea* and *Gomer* was a son:

**"So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Dibblaim,  
and she conceived and bore him a son.**

**"Then the LORD [YHVH] said to him:**

**"Call his name Jezreel, ..."** (Hosea 1:3-4a)

The name *Jezreel* יִזְרְעֵאל (Yeez rah-ehl' #3157) means: "God sows," or "God will scatter." The reason God chose this name for their firstborn son is as follows:

**"For in a little while**

**I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the  
house of Jehu,**

**And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.**

**It shall come to pass in that day**

**That I will break the bow of Israel in the  
Valley of Jezreel."**

(Hosea 1:4b-5)

Specifically, God told *Hosea* that He was going to bring an end to the House of Israel and they would no longer be allowed to dwell in the Promised Land. Other Scriptures (both in *Hosea* and in other prophetic books) indicate that the way in which God intended to accomplish this task was to "scatter" the House of Israel (and later on the House of Judah) throughout the nations of the earth:

**"I will sow them [Joseph and Judah]  
among the peoples,**

**And they shall remember Me in far countries;**

**They shall live, together with their children,**

**And they shall return."** (Zech. 10:9)

God prophesied a sowing or scattering of the House of Israel and the House of Judah among the peoples of the earth. During the time of their dispersion they would be allowed to marry and have families. Eventually, God promised to bring them back to the land, at a time which He would determine to be proper:

**"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD [YHVH],  
that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah  
with the seed of man and the seed of beast. And it shall  
come to pass, that as I have watched over them to pluck up,  
to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so  
I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the  
LORD [YHVH]."** (Jer. 31:27-28)

These prophecies were fulfilled when God destroyed the House of Israel by sowing them like seed throughout the earth. However, this sowing was for the purpose of a later harvest, when He will once again build the House of Israel back up. This is the theme which is repeated over and over in the Book of *Hosea*.

A second time, *Hosea* and *Gomer* conceived a child. This time it was a daughter:

**"And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then  
God said to him:**

**'Call her name Lo-Ruhamah,**

**For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel,  
But I will utterly take them away."** (Hosea 1:6)

As was said previously, the name *Lo-Ruhamah* (Low Rue-hah-mah) means "no mercy," or "not an object of mercy or gracious favor." The implication in this name is that God would have no mercy when He brought righteous judgment upon the House of Israel. He was committed to "utterly take them away," and He would not change His mind.

God also made some derogatory comments about the actions of the House of Judah, but He also made a commitment not to "utterly take away" the southern kingdom of Judah:

**"Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah,  
Will save them by the LORD [YHVH] their God,  
And will not save them by bow,  
Nor by sword or battle,  
By horses or horsemen."** (Hosea 1:7)

The salvation of the House of Judah did not come by their own strength through their armies or weapons of war. It came only by God's own power. We have seen this prophecy fulfilled time and again, over the centuries, as God has protected and preserved the Jewish people through nearly two thousand years of dispersion. Only in the last fifty years have they had their own military and been able to once again fight their enemies. Even now, the House of Judah must rely on God for protection, for they are vastly outnumbered by their enemies in the Middle East.

Finally, a third child, also with a symbolic name, was born to *Hosea* and *Gomer*:

**"Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.**

**"Then God said:  
'Call his name Lo-Ammi,  
For you are not My people,  
And I will not be your God.'"** (Hosea 1:8-9)

The name *Lo-Ammi* (Low Ahm-mee') means "not my people." With the birth of this child God indicated that, once the House of Israel had been removed, He would no longer look upon them as "His chosen people." This prophecy applied only to the House of Israel, it did not apply to the southern kingdom, the House of Judah.

#### ~ Future Restoration ~

At this point, when God was seemingly disowning the House of Israel, He interjected a passage of hope to them:

**"Yet the number of the children of Israel  
Shall be as the sand of the sea,  
Which cannot be measured or numbered.  
And it shall come to pass  
In the place where it was said to them,  
'You are not My people [Lo-Ammi],'  
There it shall be said to them,  
'You are sons of the living God.'"** (Hosea 1:10)

This prophecy speaks of a future time when all of the children of Jacob (both the House of Israel and the House of Judah) will be innumerable. It will be at that future moment when God will reverse the symbolic names of the children of *Hosea* and *Gomer* (who represent the children of God found in the House of Israel) and the two houses will be reunited in the very land where this prophecy was given, over 2700 years ago:

**"Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel  
Shall be gathered together,  
And appoint for themselves one head;  
And they shall come up out of the land,  
For great will be the day of Jezreel [God's sowing]!  
Say to your brethren, 'My people [Ammi],'**

**And to your sisters, "Mercy is shown [Ruhamah]."** (Hosea 1:11; 2:1)

In this passage, God performed a word play on the names of the three children. First of all, He showed that the regathering of the two houses of Israel, would be the harvest of the scattering or "sowing" (*Jezreel*) which He performed back in the eighth century BCE with the dispersion of the House of Israel. Then God prophesied how the House of Israel (which was previously said to be *Lo-Ammi* or "not My people") would once again become *Ammi* ("My people"), and that these same people upon whom He showed *Lo-Ruhamah* ("no mercy") would then be shown *Ruhamah* ("mercy").

#### ~ The Sins of Gomer and Israel ~

What follows is a passage which explicitly shows the sins of *Gomer*. However, this passage needs to be read as an allegory or type of the sins of the House of Israel against her Husband, *YHVH*. In *Gomer's* case it was physical adultery, the giving of herself to men who were not her husband. In the case of the House of Israel, it was spiritual adultery, the giving of herself to various pagan idols; preferring them over her faithful Husband, *HaShem*:

**"Bring charges against your mother, bring charges;  
For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband!  
Let her put away her harlotries from her sight,  
And her adulteries from between her breasts;  
Lest I strip her naked  
And expose her, as in the day she was born,  
And make her like a wilderness,  
And set her like a dry land,  
And slay her with thirst."** (Hosea 2:2-3)

Charges were to be brought against the wife. In this case that included both *Gomer* and the House of Israel, the one whom she represents in this drama. Heschel comments on this passage:

"Three children were born, to whom Hosea gave symbolic names. Subsequently, however, he discovered that Gomer had been unfaithful and had given herself to many lovers. She could not remain his wife. She then left him, or was sent away by him. That was the legal way: to expel the woman who became an adulteress. The husband was not allowed to live with her." (P. 52)

This practice was born out in the relationship between God and the House of Israel, for He gave her a written bill of divorce:

**"The LORD [YHVH] said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: 'Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.**

**"And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of**

**divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also."** (Jer. 3:6-8)

Neither God nor *Hosea* were to have mercy upon the children who were born to their respective unions:

**"I will not have mercy on her children,  
For they are the children of harlotry.  
For their mother has played the harlot;  
She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.  
For she said, "I will go after my lovers,  
Who give me my bread and my water,  
My wool and my linen,  
My oil and my drink.""** (Hosea 2:4-5)

This passage does not say that the children who resulted from this union are considered to be a *mamzer* מִמְזֵר (mehm'-zehr = illegitimate children) and must be forever cast aside, but only that *Hosea* and God would not show the children mercy just because they were innocent offspring of an adulterous mother. This decision was made because, in both cases, the mother's sin had been exceedingly great.

Also, it was the belief of both *Gomer* and the House of Israel that it was not *Hosea* and God who provided their sustenance, but their lovers. In other words, *Gomer* and the people of the House of Israel were so deep into their idolatrous practice that they actually believed the produce of the land (in *Gomer's* case her daily sustenance) was a result of their praying to pagan idols.

### ~ God's Judgment ~

Because of their sins, both *Gomer* as the type, and the House of Israel as the anti-type, received judgment from God. These judgments are laid out in successive stages over the next few verses. The first judgment pertains to the futility of chasing after lovers, a practice in which both *Gomer* and the House of Israel partook, once they were free from their marriage:

**"Therefore, behold,  
I will hedge up your way with thorns,  
And wall her in,  
So that she cannot find her paths.  
She will chase her lovers,  
But not overtake them;  
Yes, she will seek them, but not find them.  
Then she will say,  
"I will go and return to my first husband,  
For then it was better for me than now."  
For she did not know  
That I gave her grain, new wine, and oil,  
And multiplied her silver and gold --  
Which they prepared for Baal."** (Hosea 2:6-8)

As a result of this futile chase after their fickle lovers, both *Gomer* and the House of Israel decided to return to their respective Husbands. However, neither one of these faithless wives realized that during the time of their infidelity they were having their physical needs met by their respective Husbands

who loved them, even though they were squandering those assets on *Baal* worship.

Because of their lack of understanding, about the origin of their provisions, God decreed a second judgment in which He began to take away their abundance of things:

**"Therefore I will return and take away  
My grain in its time  
And My new wine in its season,  
And will take back My wool and My linen,  
Given to cover her nakedness."** (Hosea 2:9)

In addition, God promised to make both of them a spectacle before their adulterous lovers:

**"Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of  
her lovers,  
And no one shall deliver her from My hand."** (Hosea 2:10)

Not only would both *Gomer* and the House of Israel be made ashamed of their actions, God also promised to take away the joy they received when celebrating the festivals of God in a pagan manner:

**"I will also cause all her mirth to cease,  
Her feast days,  
Her New Moons,  
Her Sabbaths --  
All her appointed feasts."** (Hosea 2:11)

Notice the contrast between these festivals which are called "Her" feast days and those listed as Feasts of the LORD in the *Torah*:

**"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them:  
"The feasts of the LORD [YHVH], which you shall proclaim  
to be holy convocations, these are My feasts."** (Lev. 23:2)

The next judgment in this section prophesies continued punishment in the form of a loss of produce from the land:

**"And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,  
Of which she has said,  
"These are my wages that my lovers have given me."  
So I will make them a forest,  
And the beasts of the field shall eat them."** (Hosea 2:12)

Once again there is a reiteration of the reason for all of these punishments:

**"I will punish her  
For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.  
She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry,  
And went after her lovers;  
But Me she forgot," says the LORD [YHVH]."** (Hosea 2:13)

### ~ Israel Restored ~

Our God is an awesome and merciful God. We can rejoice over the fact that His anger does not persist, but eventually subsides into tender love and merciful action. Thus, just when it seemed as though the House of Israel was doomed forever

because of her divorce from *YHVH*, the House of Israel is promised restoration to her previous position as faithful wife:

**"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
Will bring her into the wilderness,  
And speak comfort to her.  
I will give her vineyards from there,  
And the Valley of Achor [*trouble*] as a door of hope;  
She shall sing there,  
As in the days of her youth,  
As in the day when she came up from the land  
of Egypt."** (Hosea 2:14-15)

Joy is restored. The valley called "trouble" (*Achor*) now becomes a "door of hope." The House of Israel is prophesied to be allowed back into the family of God, not in an inferior status, but to the fullness they had when the marriage first began -- when the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt:

**"And it shall be, in that day,'  
Says the LORD [*YHVH*],  
'That you will call Me "My Husband [*Ishi*],"  
And no longer call Me "My Master [*Baali*],"  
For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,  
And they shall be remembered by their name  
no more."** (Hosea 2:16-17)

The definition of *Baal* or *Baali* is "master" or "lord." This passage prophesies that a close personal relationship of marriage will be restored between God and the House of Israel. When that occurs, she will be allowed to call *YHVH* by the affectionate term "my Husband" rather than "my Lord," which denotes rule or authority. Not only will the marriage relationship be restored, but God will once again become their protector when His covenant with them is renewed:

**"In that day I will make a covenant for them  
With the beasts of the field,  
With the birds of the air,  
And with the creeping things of the ground.  
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,  
To make them lie down safely."** (Hosea 2:18)

This covenant will insure that they will never again have to fear the beasts of the field as they did when God lifted His protection back in verse 12. They will be able to live in peace and safety. Not only will there be peace, prosperity, and protection under this new covenant; it will also include a new betrothal of marriage:

**"I will betroth you to Me forever;  
Yes, I will betroth you to Me  
In righteousness and justice,  
In lovingkindness and mercy;  
I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
And you shall know the LORD [*YHVH*]."** (Hosea 2:19-20)

This passage projects forward into a time comparable to that about which Jeremiah prophesied; a time of a new or renewed covenant:

**"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and  
every man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD**

**[*YHVH*]," for they all shall know Me, from the least of them  
to the greatest of them, says the LORD [*YHVH*]. For I will  
forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no  
more."** (Jer. 31:34)

The next verse begins with the phrase "in that day," which sets the time frame for the events being prophesied as the end of this age, when Messiah *Y'shua* will return to set up His Father's kingdom upon the earth:

**"It shall come to pass in that day  
That I will answer,' says the LORD [*YHVH*];  
'I will answer the heavens,  
And they shall answer the earth.  
The earth shall answer  
With grain,  
With new wine,  
And with oil;  
They shall answer Jezreel."** (Hosea 2:21-22)

The last line could also be translated: "They shall answer, 'God will sow.'" Remember, the oldest son of *Hosea* and *Gomer* was named *Jezreel* (God Sows).

Just as it was written, God took the House of Israel and He "sowed" them throughout the nations of the world:

**"For surely I will command,  
And will sift the house of Israel among all nations,  
As grain is sifted in a sieve;  
Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground."** (Amos 9:9)

Yet to be fulfilled is the prophecy that not a kernel would be lost, for the House of Israel, along with the House of Judah, is prophesied to eventually be restored together in the land known as Israel. There they will dwell in peace and prosperity under the guiding hand of their loving Husband; the God of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov* (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob):

**"But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as  
in the former days,' says the LORD [*YHVH*] of hosts.**

**"For the seed shall be prosperous,  
The vine shall give its fruit,  
The ground shall give her increase,  
And the heavens shall give their dew --  
I will cause the remnant of this people  
To possess all these.  
And it shall come to pass  
That just as you were a curse among the nations,  
O house of Judah and house of Israel,  
So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.  
Do not fear,  
Let your hands be strong."** (Zech. 8:11-13)

The "seed" which God has so carefully sown (*Jezreel*) throughout the world will produce a bounteous harvest because the master gardener, God Himself, has tended the crop. In that day, when all of this comes to pass, the original names of the children of *Gomer* will no longer apply to the children of Israel:

**"Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,  
And I will have mercy [*Ruhamah*] on her who had  
not obtained mercy [*Lo-Ruhamah*];**

**Then I will say to those who were not My people [Lo-Ammi],  
"You are My people [Ammi]!"  
And they shall say,  
"You are my God!"**" (Hosea 2:23)

Once again we see the word play on the names of the children. *Lo-Ammi* (not My people) will become *Ammi* (My people) and those who had formerly been *Lo-Ruhamah* (without mercy) will become *Ruhamah* (with mercy).

#### ~ Gomer Restored ~

Even as God has promised to restore Israel to her former position in the marriage, so too *Gomer* was to be restored to her husband, for *Hosea* was told to take her back and to love her:

**"Then the LORD [YHVH] said to me, 'Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD [YHVH] for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.'"** (Hosea 3:1)

Here again, we see clearly how God used the marriage of *Hosea* and *Gomer* to be a living analogy of His relationship with the House of Israel. Naturally, *Hosea* obeyed the command:

**"So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. And I said to her, 'You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man -- so, too, will I be toward you.'"** (Hosea 3:2-3)

An important point here is that *Gomer* had to be redeemed from her lovers before she could be taken back as *Hosea's* wife. The price for *Gomer's* redemption was fifteen shekels of silver plus one and one-half omers of barley. That made her total redemption price ninety shekels of silver or three times the cost of redeeming a Hebrew slave, as specified in the *Torah*:

**"If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, ..." (Ex. 21:32)**

**"A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver."** (Lev. 27:16b)

Just as *Gomer* had to be redeemed from her lovers, so too, the House of Israel must be redeemed from her idolatry so that she can return to the marriage relationship out of which she was cast. We believe this redemption is effected by none other than *Y'shua HaMashiach* (Jesus the Messiah), through the Brideprice which He paid with His shed blood:

**"... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ [Messiah], as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."** (I Pet. 1:18-19)

*Hosea's* life was a mini-drama depicting the relationship between the Creator God and His wife, the children of Israel:

**"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.**

**"Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD [YHVH] their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD [YHVH] and His goodness in the latter days."** (Hosea 3:4-5)

This section ends with a direct reference to the latter days, which we believe are the ones in which we are currently living. This is evidenced by the following conditions to name a few:

- ◆ Approximately two thousand years have elapsed since the birth of *Y'shua*, and approximately six thousand years since Biblical creation.
- ◆ Weapons of mass destruction are available to enable the fulfillment of numerous end-time prophecies.
- ◆ The knowledge of the "Lost" tribes of the House of Israel is being widely disseminated and many are beginning to discuss the possibility of the return of Ephraim to the Promised Land.

#### ~ Summary ~

Like several other prophets, *Hosea* was required to act out the prophecies which he was given to proclaim. However, of all the prophets, *Hosea* is the only one who had to live the prophecy for his entire married life. This was because God used *Hosea's* marriage to *Gomer* as a living analogy to depict His own marriage to the House of Israel.

The shock of reading that *Hosea* was required to marry a woman given to harlotry causes this prophetic book to grab our attention and makes it deeply meaningful to all students of the Scriptures. It is presumable that *Hosea* and *Gomer* lived out their later years in a loving, peaceful, and righteous union, for that is the relationship depicted in prophecy for Israel and her husband *YHVH*.

Abraham J. Heschel sums up his view of the marriage of *Hosea* and *Gomer* as "an act of sympathy." He says that their marriage was not merely for public information but so that the prophet *Hosea* could understand the relationship of God to the House of Israel and what that relationship meant to Him:

"As time went by, *Hosea* became aware of the fact that his personal fate was a mirror of the divine pathos, that his sorrow echoed the sorrow of God.

...

"Its meaning was not objective, inherent in the marriage, but subjective, evocative. Only by living through in his own life what the divine Consort of Israel experienced, was the prophet able to attain sympathy for the divine situation. ... Its purpose was not to demonstrate divine attitudes to the people, but to educate *Hosea* himself in the understanding of divine sensibility." (p. 56)

By coming to understand the "divine sensibility," *Hosea* was able to discern the motive for God's concern toward the House of Israel. That concern can be summed up in the word love:

**"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."** (John 3:16-17)

Heschel again makes a powerful point:

"How does one reconcile the tenderness of divine love with the vehemence of divine punishment? Clearly it is not a love that is exclusive and that ignores the wickedness of the beloved, forgiving carelessly every fault. Here is a love grown bitter with the waywardness of man. The Lord is in love with Israel, but He also has a passionate love of right and a burning hatred of wrong." (p. 50)

### ~ The Future ~

In surveying the entire Book of *Hosea*, and comparing it to the history of Israel, we see that the latter parts of this prophetic work have not yet been fulfilled. For the House of Israel, which was taken captive and removed from the Promised Land, has not yet returned. Although a small remnant migrated to the House of Judah and subsequently became known as Jews, the overwhelming majority of people from the House of Israel have seemingly disappeared from history and, according to Amos 9:9, have been sifted throughout all the nations of the earth. So, the prophecies which tell of God accepting the House of

Israel back into a full marriage relationship and once again placing them in the Promised Land, have yet to be fulfilled.

This means that the Book of *Hosea* is a prophetic book for today's world and today's headlines. All of this will come to fruition when the King of kings and the Lord of lords returns to fetch His Bride and establish His Father's kingdom over all the earth:

**"At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD [YHVH], and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD [YHVH], to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts."**

**"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers."** (Jer. 3:17-18)

**"In that day 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD [YHVH]' shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's [YHVH's] house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD [YHVH] of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD [YHVH] of hosts."** (Zech. 14:20-21)

We eagerly await that precious day.

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