

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XXII

Issue 15

*Published occasionally for mourners in Zion*

*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## OUR ISHI

*And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. Hosea 2:15-17*

Hosea is the only one of GOD's prophets who was commanded by the LORD to marry a harlot with children from her whoredom. "And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son." (Hos 1:2-3) Some, who have moral objections to such a command, have imagined that this is but a parable and not a real situation. It seems quite clear that such an idea is not correct since we see the aftermath of his union with her and his subsequent and continued care for her in spite of her unfaithfulness to him. "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." (Hos 2:6-8)

Moralists generally try to reason that GOD must conform to the standards which HE sets for HIS creation, but HE is not bound by such things and man's reason fails him as he would seek to define the bounds of HIM who is an absolute Sovereign who does according to HIS will at all times. It is impossible that men should judge HIS actions according to their own limited understanding. Whether this is a parable (which I do not believe is the case) or not, the LORD would teach us, through the prophet Hosea and his unfaithful wife Gomer, the great love and watch care that the LORD overshadows HIS elect with throughout their life, even when they are not aware from whence their blessings come.

The LORD has always viewed HIS chosen Bride with great affection, which is in no way predicated upon her love or faithfulness to HIM. In fact, it is against the very backdrop of her rebellion, disobedience, and unfaithfulness that HE is pleased to demonstrate the great love and care that HE has had for her from the very beginning. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:6-8) "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1John 4:9-10)

John sets forth this principle in quite simple terms. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1John 4:19) We would learn from this account of Hosea's care and concern for Gomer (who was wretched, poor, naked and completely undeserving of his care for her) how the LORD would declare HIS greater love and concern for the House of Israel, whose unfaithfulness is the stuff of legend. Yet in HIS dealings with the carnal nation of Israel, we are shown HIS determination to manifest that people in the Earth, who are HIS out of every nation, tribe, and tongue. In fact HE would demonstrate the establishment of HIS new covenant which did not rest on the Law but upon HIS promise even as HE told Jeremiah, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer 31:33) This is a covenant not with Abraham or Moses but rather with CHRIST who is the SEED of Abraham. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of

*one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal 3:16) So the promise in CHRIST is yea and amen and does not depend in any way upon any activity of those who are the recipients of the benefits of that covenant. “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:23-24)*

The LORD used the carnal nation of Israel and HIS choice of her out of all the nations upon the Earth, to illustrate HIS choice and everlasting love of that true Israel which are HIS not by natural birth but according as HE chose them in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. Unlike carnal Israel, they cannot be known since they are scattered among the nations of the Earth and are imperceptible from any other people until such time as HE is pleased to call them from darkness to LIGHT. All of the promised blessings which HE has designed for HIS people are as certain before that event as they are afterwards. However, her enjoyment and reception of those blessings come to her at a time which is appointed by HIM and cannot be forfeited or missed because of the faithfulness of HIM who has promised.

Just like the carnal nation of Israel sojourned in the land of Egypt and felt the lash of their taskmasters, so too are the sons of GOD made subject unto vanity in order that the LORD might be glorified in their deliverance from the same. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb 2:14-15) Until that deliverance is brought to them, they appear no different from the world in general. *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph 2:2-3)**

In their natural state, before they are born again (*“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph 2:1)*), they cannot be discerned from the world, either by themselves or others. *“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.” (Gal 4:1-3)* But the LORD who has loved them from the beginning has ordained the preaching of the Gospel of HIS glory to be heard by them at the appointed hour, in order that they might be brought to a knowledge of that which HE has done for them. *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2Tim 1:9-10)*

There is no sweeter revelation that can be given to an awakened sinner, than to be given faith to believe that JESUS CHRIST is the REDEEMER of sinners, who has poured out HIS life's blood in order to pay their debt of sin and to bring them by a way that they knew not. HE does indeed give them *“ears to hear”* that message which they may have disregarded many times before, but in the hour of their *“calling”*, they are humbled in the dust of adoring wonder, able to cling to HIS work as their only HOPE. They are then engaged in a warfare which they heretofore had never experienced. Now the world and their flesh unite in such a way to sow seeds of doubt and fear in their minds, stirring up questions that this newfound *“FAITH”* may not be enough. The SPIRIT answers in this conflict convincing them that CHRIST is ALL, yet these hounds of doubt and fear would continue to surround them, nipping at their heels and threatening to destroy their newfound HOPE.

This is the conflict which many believers in Galatia had fallen prey to. Paul sternly admonishes them, *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” (Gal 1:6)* The tendency of the flesh is to revert to its own effort to gain the favor of GOD by going about to establish its own *“righteousness”* (of which it has none) by observance of the form of the letter of the Law rather than resting in CHRIST's fulfillment of the Law. Thus, the Gospel ever thunders out this message; *“Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (1Cor 2:2)* HE is our *ISHI*, (i.e.; our beloved HUSBAND and CHAMPION) and not our *Baali*; (i.e.; a stern taskmaster). *“As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” (Isa 62:5)* CHRIST is ALL and in all.