

GOD AND ISRAEL: A LOVE STORY

God uses the experience of Hosea to make him a more emotional and effective prophet to Israel. He had to marry a woman of harlotry (which wouldn't be hard to find, since paganism led many Israelites into sexual immorality—**1:2**). He married Gomer (**1:3**). They had three children, each with a name God commanded because of prophetic significance (**1:3-9**). This had to be painful for Hosea, knowing that his wife was unfaithful to him.

This pain is what God felt because of the unfaithfulness of Israel (**2:1-13**). God had treated Israel wonderfully because of His undeserved love (**Deuteronomy 7:7-8**). But Israel rejected God. How do we make God feel after He has given His only Son for our unworthy behavior?

But God still loved Israel (**2:14-23**). He would court Israel and persuade Israel to return to Him. This is why God told Hosea to redeem his wife (**3:1-5**). She had become an enslaved prostitute, not much different from what happens to young women who go into prostitution today.

This is a picture of the great love that God has for all people. We all have sinned, thus selling ourselves to the bondage of sin. God paid the most precious price possible—His Son—to redeem us from slavery to sin.

It must have been painful to see His Son mistreated the way He was by thoughtless, selfish, and hateful humans. But God was willing to endure that pain in order to free us from our sin. Can we even begin to measure the joy that God has when one sinner repents (**Luke 15**)? Just consider what God did to make it possible for us to return to Him.