



THEREFORE, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.¹⁷ For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.¹⁸ And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.¹⁹ And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.²⁰ I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;²² And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.²³ And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. (Hosea 2:14-23)

Let us not be deceived by the brevity of the above text for its implications of Israel Future are profound. From the ancient days of Israel's dissolution in the Ten Tribes of the north, she has wandered aimlessly with neither chart nor compass except for the splendor of light breaking through by the Providence of God from the brake in storm clouds which attended her exile. She had forgotten her heritage in God and her

kinship to that Redeemer made reference to in Abraham and the testimony of our friend, Job. *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."* (Job 19:25-27) In fact, Israel suffered a spiritual amnesia of her past and identity. The Israel of God has been sprinkled among the nations since the days of Abraham. Those of Abraham's race were not all part of Israel. They added their own religion to that declared by God. But the spiritual lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob remains fixed among those of faith as the Israel of God.

The Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Jewish rulers at the time of the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ were as lost in manmade religion as most churches of our own time. The Passover which Christ celebrated was that same 'Lord's' Passover to which the ancient prophets referred. (see Ex12:27,48, 34:25; Lev. 23:5; Num 9:10, 14, 28:16; Deut 16:1, 2; 2 Kings 23:21, etc.) In the days of its institution it has been referred to as the Lord's Passover, or the Passover of the Lord, in the days of the Prophets. But the order and observance of the Lord's Passover were changed somewhat and added to by the Jewish hierarchy so that by the time of our Lord's ministry, it was frequently called the Jew's Passover. Nonetheless, our Lord Jesus Christ became our full and complete Passover at His Passion and Sacrifice at Golgotha. It is His Passover Supper that we observe in our Holy Communion

The Jews laid claim to the title of Israel, and so they were racially at some point a part of Israel; however, the Ten Tribes of Israel had disappeared just as surely as any trace of true faith had disappeared in the Jewish religion (as contrasted with that of Abraham's faith). *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:"* The seed are called by means of faith and not racial generation.

We see this principle exemplified in many other passages of New Testament Scripture including: *"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children*

of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." See how this passage follows the scarlet thread of salvation in Romans:

COMETH this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law (bloodline), but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith (spiritual), that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law (blood descent), but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." (Romans 4:9-16)

There are many other passages that point to the descent from Abraham is by faith and not bloodline only, but space in this short study does not permit elaboration. As was the Israel to whom Hosea witnessed, Israel has been blinded so that they have no reliance on claims of descent, but faith only. In His predestined election, God knows His own and calls them forth by faith by the means of grace alone so that merit is not a factor, and could not be in deserving salvation. Do you boast of your choice in following righteousness? If so, you boast in vain for righteousness on your part had nothing to do with God's calling and election of your sorry soul to His flock.

Hosea's dealing with Gomer and her children is not unlike His dealings with Israel of today. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." (Hosea 2:14) Israel has been historically drawn into the wilderness when she has forgotten her salvation in Christ. The wilderness is a quiet place and one affording little distraction except for thirst of water and hunger for bread – the **Water of Life** and the **Bread of Heaven**. Here are absent the singing of birds, or the roar of the rivers. God's Voice is much more easily discerned in the wilderness.

The Israel of both the Old and New Testament Church is scattered throughout many nations, but God knows His sheep. He calls them by name, and they know His Voice and respond. Her husband, as Isaiah says, is her Maker. He will take back Israel, His estranged wife. He will utter words of comfort in the wilderness wherever He has drawn her. The false gods that have occupied an unrighteous curiosity will be forgotten: "For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." Israel will forget the false gods (Baalim) as easily as she formerly forgot her true God and Husband of her youth. Here is a promise to comfort those whose hearts are chambered in love for their precious pets: "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely."

Here is God's promise to all of Israel who place their trust and faith, by grace, in that promise made to Abraham long ago in the wilderness of Canaan: "And I will betroth

thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.