



The Prophet and the Prostitute

Denis V Smith



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A Divine Drama in Flesh and Blood Reality

Dr. Denis V Smith



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Fathers' Day is a secular celebration inaugurated in the early twentieth century to complement Mother's Day in celebrating fatherhood and parenting by males, and to honour and commemorate fathers and forefathers.

It is celebrated on a variety of dates worldwide and typically involves gift-giving to fathers and family-oriented activities.

USA – the third Sunday of June.

Germany – Ascension Day, the Thursday forty days after Easter

Roman Catholic tradition – Saint Joseph's Day, March 19

Taiwan – 8th August

Thailand – the birthday of the king on December 5

What are your memories of your father?

Some people have sad memories of a father who mistreated them or rejected them

Some fathers are hurting because they know there will be no contact on that day with a child they loved.

I have had three mothers and two fathers – two of them I never met and one of them brings sad memories when, as an eight-year-old losing her. The other two, I'll leave for now.

I wasn't born into a 'normal' household [whatever normal means] and when I looked for a role model on how to be a father – well the options had not yet arrived on TV:

- Howard Cunningham
- Mr Mom
- Mrs Doubtfire

There were no grandfathers I could relate to. It wasn't until 1958, I began my search which has led me to an unusual role model for this message for a Father's Day meditation.

The story occurred 2,700 years ago. However, its message is so much like what happens in the twenty-first century, it could have happened in the streets of any one of our cities.

But it did not happen in Australia or America. It occurred in Israel. At the time of our story, the nation of Israel had been divided for some time.

Their first three kings ruled over a united nation for 120 years. And it was hard to find a perfect role model among them.

King Saul had appeared with such promise – standing head and shoulders over every other man.

However, forty years of history has only recorded the story of a man with a hardening heart.

Not a hardening of the arteries, for that could be handled.

When a man hardens his heart against the Lord; the trail leads ever downward – unless heart surgery is performed.

Beginning with such promise, the record shows only a life of defeat and shame

This king died on his own sword on a lonely battlefield as his enemies triumphed.

David is crowned king of the nation. The shepherd is now a king!



What a start – a man after God’s own heart who fell and sank into the depths of adultery.

And then he committed the crime of murder in an attempt to hide his crime. Allowed to continue for forty years also, he trains one of his sons to assume his throne upon his death.

Solomon the Wise now rules.

A good start is ruined by a divided heart.

Not listening to his father and ignoring the precepts of the Lord, he slumps his shoulders in shame as the sun sets on his forty years. A harem of wives and concubines has brought idolatry and false gods into the land.

As goes the king, so go the people. His successors will fight for the right to lead a united nation!

Rehoboam, Solomon’s son will lead two of the twelve tribes in the south and call themselves Judah.

The northern ten tribes will revolt and under Jeroboam eventually set up their capital in the north in Samaria.

The nation is divided – civil war has split the country in two!

The northern nation’s history is one of sinfulness and idolatry!

A succession of wicked kings and queens has brought the nation towards the judgments of God.

Her cup of iniquity is almost full.

To this nation of ten tribes, God will send his last messenger with an unusual communication to bring them back to Himself. If this fails, the sword of judgment will fall!

It is the eighth century BC and a man who dearly loves his country is commissioned as a prophet of God.

This patriot will stand up for the God who called Him and proclaim His everlasting love for the nation.

His message for the main part will be ignored and he will meet a violent death in the last days of the nation.

Externally, the armies of Assyria are increasing in strength and marching nearer and nearer to Israel as they sweep all opposition in their path.

Internally, there is a worsening political situation in the land.

Centuries earlier, when the ancestors of these Israelites entered the land of Canaan they met Canaan's gods.

There were three:

- Their chief god was a sky god,
- his wife and earth goddess
- And their son.

The Baals!

Israel borrowed the lifestyles of their neighbouring Canaanites.

They combined all their male gods under the name of Baal or Baalim who is their chief god now. Ashtoreth, adopted from the Babylonians is their chief female deity.

By rejecting the true worship of Jehovah and committing themselves to this system of worship, everything they own will be affected.

Life in the home, work in the fields and commitments to political ideals will be challenged!

The Baals were regarded as a source of fertility [Hosea 2:5; 4:10] and financial prosperity [Hosea 2:8]

Sex and money – the two headline grabbers of this decade!

To worship them demanded neither self-discipline nor high moral standards. Ritualistic sexual orgies abounded at the bases of their statues.

The kings, priests and merchants were the main offenders in promoting this lifestyle. [Hosea 5:1-7]

Lawlessness and injustice reigned!

Burglary, robbery, murder and drunkenness abounded! [Hosea 6:7 - 7:7]

Am I reading from today's newspapers? Listening to TV?

Into this moral stench, a man is prepared to be sent in order to proclaim a message of hope.

Hosea's name means "deliverance" or "salvation" and is a Hebrew form of Joshua – Jesus is the New Testament form.

His lineage is summed up in the opening words...

"Hosea, the son of Beeri" [Hosea 1:1]

The Rabbis assert that whenever any prophet's father is named in Scripture, the father also was a prophet. And that's all we know.

His preparation for ministry will take a little longer.

"When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry. For the land has committed great spiritual adultery by departing from the LORD" [Hosea 1:2]

He may have been in his early twenties; wandering through the hills and valleys of the north; meditating upon the Invisible God he loved and desired and thinking about the eternal God, more than any of the Baals or Ashtoreths abounding in the land.

He walked past an idol grove, watching the debauched worship of the idol as men and women engaged in sexual immorality at its feet.

His heart heaved in revulsion at what he saw.

He cried out to God, recalling the history of his nation.

What promise they had, if only they had obeyed!

This God who had led their ancestors out of Egyptian slavery and bondage by mighty signs and wonders is now ignored by the masses and worshipped only by a faithful few. Hosea was one of the few!



To his astonishment, he heard the voice of God as Moses had done centuries earlier.

The instructions were clear – “Marry a harlot!”

There were many in Israel at the time. His mind reeled as he contemplated the message.

“What will my father say?”

“What will my friends say?”

“God, how can I do this?”

We do not know how he met or even proposed to the beautiful Gomer.

She would not know why he proposed or what he was even thinking on their wedding day. The Bible records simply –

“So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim.” [Hosea 1:3] Her name means “completion.”

She revelled in her new found chance to become accepted in the community.

A new chance, a fresh start and an esteemed husband; all this meant she may now make it in life.

Her past life of prostitution is now behind her as she settles into the new responsibilities of a wife.

She has no idea that this marriage will fail. She is only enjoying the best wishes of her friends and family. Only her closest prostitute friends are at the wedding. Her new found dignity demands it.

Hosea hides the wounds he so deeply feels. He does not understand the Divine decree. He has forgiven his wife for her past and hopes for a bright future!

Time passes. **“And she conceives and bares him a son.”** [Hosea 1:3]



The first year of marriage has brought a new balance into her life.

She is the respected wife of a moral man; she is not given over to the vices of Baal worship at this time.

Now she is the mother of a son.

Hosea would be thrilled as he proudly parades his firstborn before his friends. He has no name chosen.

But he hears the voice of God, **“Then the LORD 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. It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel”** [Hosea 1:4-5]

It was not uncommon for people to have meaningful and prophetic names in the Bible.

In this case, God used the birth of the child as a reminder that He would soon judge the nation.

Hosea understood the full implication of the message each time he looked at his son.

Then, Gomer became a mother for the second time!

“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 of the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away...” [Hosea 1:6]



The name is significant again.

Lo-Ruhamah means "not pitied" "unpitied" "Having no mercy!"

It is even suggested that Hosea recognised that this daughter may not be his child.

Gomer is beginning to wander back to her old paths!

Hosea lives with the uncertainty.

There are long nights ahead of him as he considers whether or not he was the child's father.

Gomer cares for their son and daughter



Time passes and the record declares – **“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]

Hosea is fairly sure he is the father of his first-born son Jezreel. He is uncertain about his daughter although he desperately wants to believe she is!

This time he knows he is not the father. Gomer has played the harlot.

The father is unknown to Hosea and the name he gives to the child reinforces his belief – Lo-Ami – the name means “not my people!”

He prophesies to his nation, using his children as the examples...

**“For they are the children of harlotry.
For their mother has played the harlot;
She who has conceived them has done 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 2:4-6]

Gomer is like the nation.



Leaving the love of a righteous God for the harlotry of idol worship, the nation has conceived the rewards of sin and will soon give birth to the judgments of God upon themselves!

Gomer is like all mankind in general and you and me in particular.

A Creator God has reached out toward mankind and offered everything we need for life. But we choose to ignore His love and worship the creation more than the Creator! We become enticed with the pleasures and entertainments of this world.

It is more gratifying to sit anywhere else than at church! Like the prodigal son, we enjoy the short term benefits of our wasted moments than a relationship back home with our Father!

Gomer has returned to the old ways!

She has tired of the responsibilities of keeping the home and tending her family.



Hosea's love for God is a tiresome pressure on her. It keeps her in check only for a while. Now she has had enough!

Without looking back over her shoulder, she walks out of the house, leaving her children and husband to fend for themselves!

She will return once and for all to her old profession; there, she believes she will find everything she needs – money, fame, lovers, a reputation, her success, prosperity and riches!

She has set up business again in the town. Hosea is left at home with the children!

His heart is breaking as day after day, he hears the reports coming back from the market place.

"There goes Hosea," whispers one of the women on market day, "he is, or was the husband of Gomer who has the largest clientele of any of the girls from the red light district."

The men of the cities come and go to the beautiful Gomer.

It matters not that she is married and the mother of three broken-hearted children who are longing for a mother's caress.

Time passes and now her business is going bad. The rich no longer seek her favours; she lowers her prices, but it is only sign to the community that she is losing touch with reality!

She redecorates her premises – all to no avail.

The words of God come true:

**"She will pursue her lovers,
But not overtake them;
Yes, she will seek them,
But not find them."**

[Hosea 2:7]

Gomer has lost her clientele now.

There is no more money to pay the bills and she is hungry. Her friends desert her as the owner of her premises evicts her and throws her and her meagre possessions onto the street.

God's promises ring true again although she does not know it...

**"Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers,
And no one shall deliver her from My hand.
I will also cause all her mirth to cease,
Her Feast days,
Her New Moons,
Her Sabbaths -
All her appointed Feasts.
And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,
Of which she has said,
"These are my rewards that my lovers have given me."
So I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field shall eat them.
I will punish her
For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.
She decked herself with her earrings and jewellery,
And went after her lovers.
Then she forgot me," says the Lord."**

[Hosea 2:10-13]

She is lying in the dusty street, pitifully clutching what possessions she has left. She thinks to herself...

“I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.”

[Hosea 2:7]

But she is too proud!

For a few days, she wanders the streets, begging for food, offering her body for what little money she can receive; but now she is destitute.

“The slave auction!” she thinks.

There, she will be able to sell herself and pocket the money.

Even if she has no money, she can at least have food and somewhere to live.

And, who knows whether her owner will not promote her in the household.



This would be better than begging in rags on the street corners and living at the rubbish tip with the lepers.

At least there is a ray of hope.

She makes her way to the auctioneer and offers herself for sale.

He looks at her and commands one of his own servants to clean her up. "She may fetch a small price if she were cleaner," he thinks to himself.

The Auction is the next day.

Meanwhile the broken hearted Hosea is still at home with his children and is meditating as the sun sets over the western mountain range. He hears the familiar voice of the God he loves...

"Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who took to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans."

[Hosea 3:1]

"God," he cries, "you must be kidding!" "How can I love the woman who deserted me and my children and has become a renowned prostitute in the town?"

"And if I did, where would I find her?"

Hosea knows that obedience is necessary to His God, so he wanders the streets of the city, looking for his wife. He finds her previous address and knocks at the door. Cheap perfume odours fill the doorway as a jewelled and painted lady answers the door.

"Is Gomer here?" he asks.

"Honey, you must be out of touch. She left here weeks ago. I'm here now and I'm available," she enticingly murmurs.

"I want Gomer? Where is she?"

"Honey," [the mood of the prostitute changes now] "She's on the auction block at 9.30 in the morning" she retorts as she slams the door in Hosea's face. It is a long night.

He has checked the Auction listing for tomorrow. At 9.00 am he stands with the crowds, hiding himself as much as possible. It is 9.30 am! Gomer is brought forward.

Her beauty has diminished; sin has left its scars – it always does! The once beautiful mother looks like her reputation is correct! The people in the market place laugh! They know Gomer. Some of the men have been her customers!



The auction commences

"What am I bid for the beautiful Gomer?" laughs the auctioneer.

He doubts if there will be a bid!

"A shekel of silver?"

"Two!"

"Three!"

The auctioneer is amazed.

"Gentlemen," he croons, "This lady knows it all!"

"Four!"

Hosea hears himself shout, "Ten!"

He hides his face!

"Eleven!"

"Twelve!"

"Thirteen!"

"Fourteen! And that's my last bid!" yells a fat landowner.

"Fifteen shekels of silver!" screams Hosea

"And one and a half homers of barley which represents another fifteen shekels of silver. And that's thirty shekels of silver in all!"

[Hosea 3:2]

"Sold!" yells the auctioneer as his hand comes down to seal the sale!

Thirty shekels of silver in all!

"That's the price paid to a slave who is gored by a bull," commented one of the Priests who knew the Torah well. [Exodus 31:32]

Hosea walked toward the auctioneer's scribe as Gomer looked to see who had purchased her.

She reeled in shock. It was her husband!

"Take her home!" the Scribe sneered, "She's all yours!"



"She was before I ever bought her," replied Hosea softly.

Hosea turned to his wife.

Tears are streaming down his face.

She is crying too...

"You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; thus I will also be towards you!"

[Hosea 3:3]

In other words, "Come on home Gomer, the price is paid. No more of your wandering ways. Let's get back to where we were before. The children are waiting."

As she walked slowly behind her husband, through the puzzled faces of the crowd; up the road to the old house, she called to Hosea, "Why did you do it?"

Hosea turned slowly towards Gomer.

Their eyes met. They are both crying now.

"Because I love you Gomer!"

He took her hand.

"Come on home. All is forgiven!"

Three beautiful children were waiting at the gate, gazing towards the city. They ran towards their mother and father. All five knelt in the dusty road.

"Gomer," said Hosea that evening, "there's one more lesson for you to learn."

"What's that?" she replied. He continued. "I went out to the fields to pray when God told me to go and buy you back. I didn't want to do it. I said, 'God, you've broken my heart.'"

"He replied, 'Now you know what I feel like when My people leave Me. When they turn away from my love and turn to man-made idols in the pursuit of pleasure. When they enjoy the raisin cakes offered to the Baals and Ashtoreths. When they dishonour their bodies in illicit sex and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season and turn their backs on everlasting love.'"

"You see, Gomer. We are the object lesson to the nation. God wants us back with Himself. And our nation is made up of families and individuals. And if you were the first to come back, I think that would be a good start."

I think Gomer was the first!



But she was not the last!

Eight hundred years later, the Apostle Paul was writing to the Christians in Rome and said these words...

**"I will call them My People,
Who were not My People,
And her beloved,
Who was not beloved."**



**And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,
You are not my people,
They will be called sons of the living God."**

[Romans 9:25-26]

He alluded to the story of Hosea, Gomer and the children.

It would seem possible that Hosea renamed his children.

He called Lo-Ruhamah [meaning "not pitied!"] to his side and said,

"Daughter, you shall be called Ruhamah – "merciful" or "mercy" – my daughter!"

You don't have to go around the streets any more with your friends questioning the details of your birth – You are now mine!

He calls Lo-Ami [the name means "not my people!"] to him and says, "Son you shall be known in the city as Ami – My people –my son!"

You have walked the streets of the city for these past years and you have known by your name that I am not your father.

Your friends have called you illegitimate!

You have been known as the boy who didn't know who was his real father!

From today – I am your father!!

Very few people in the world can really understand what that meant to that young boy when Hosea proclaimed him as his son!

The Bible says.

"To as many as received Christ, to them He have the authority to call themselves the sons of God - all they had to do was believe on His name."

[John 1:12]

To one day be estranged from God – And the next moment, through God's grace to be called a child of God and have the right for the first time in your life to really understand the "Lord's Prayer" when you pray – Our Father! And a family was united!

And families can still be united today. We can be changed from the enemies of God to the friends of God. All we have to do is be reconciled to Him.

Even the old Apostle Peter could reflect on the story of Hosea in 1 Peter 2:9-10.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but now are the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

[1 Peter 2:9-10]

Where are you now?

In the streets of shameful sinfulness?

In the market place where your human dignity is stripped from you?

Or on your way home? – Because someone loved you enough to pay the price for your freedom.

Now you know who the main characters are in the story...

You and I are Gomer

and

Hosea?

He is the one who paid the price so that we could go home and live forever in love and eternal life – His name is Jesus!

Come on home, the price is paid!

Calvary covers it all!

It's paid in full!

Come with me, as I conclude this story to the scenes of Calvary...

See the Heavenly Hosea walking up the hill of Calvary. See the crown of thorns; the back that is cut with the lashes of the Roman whips; see him fall under the weight of the cross as he climbs the Via Dolorosa;

Look closely as you see the nails crashing through His hands and feet;

Listen to the dull blow of the hammer in the hand of the Roman soldier;

Gaze carefully as the cross is raised up between heaven and earth as if to indicate – “Earth doesn't want you and Heaven can't receive you!”

Hear the loud cry as the Son of God yells, “Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?”

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me??”

See Him – who never sinned – become your sin and mine!



See Him paying the price for your freedom at Calvary's auction as this world's auctioneer, the Devil, bargains for your soul!

See the dark clouds – hiding the details of the transaction of redemption.

Feel the earthquake – as this world shakes in sorrow and despair as the Prince of Life Dies!

Listen again, the yells of the Roman soldiers who gamble for His last remaining garment.

Listen to the mocking cries of the religious leaders who say, "Come down from the cross and we will believe you!"

Watch the thieves – one turning away from sin, seeking forgiveness and redemption as the other dying in his own sin!

See the blood of redemption flow down from the old rugged cross with the potential to wash away the sins of the world!

Stand there and ask the question that came from the lips of Gomer to Hosea...

"Why are you doing this? Why are you paying the price?"

And hear the words that come from the cross that echo around the hills of Jerusalem and today come into our meeting and to your ears –

"BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!"

Gomer asked the question, "but how can you love me? How can you receive me?"

Hosea's response echoes throughout time and eternity – "I paid the price – I bore your sins; took your shame; paid the penalty – come on home!"

And as they came into the old house, Gomer was afraid to go inside until she heard Hosea say – "Come on in – you're standing on redemption ground!"

And she walked in – and so can you – the door is wide open – the price is paid – Jesus has walked into the market place of your world and paid more than a handful of silver shekels and a bag of barley.

You were redeemed – not with corruptible things such as silver or gold – but with the precious blood of Christ – as of a lamb – without spot or blemish – come on home!

And now tell me, as you look into the face of the One who paid the price so you could be free from your sins; tell me –what are you going to do about this love?

Reject it?

A man or woman may choose to go to hell, but they will walk over every obstacle that a God of love can place in their way – and the last obstacle they will have to step over is the Cross of Calvary!

The cross is before you – what are you going to do about it? The choice is yours!

A Prayer

"Father, I come to you in this prayer. I admit that I have fallen short of your requirements and my sins have separated me from you.

I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again.

I believe that your Son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive and hears my prayer.

I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. I trust Him alone for the free gift of eternal life.

Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will, according to your Word, for the rest of my life.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."



The man, who wrote "Amazing Grace," John Newton, also made that choice.

He heard the reasons why Christ died for his sin – and he did not reject the amazing grace of God that turned him from a life of sin to later walk with God!

He died on December 21, 1807 and was buried in the vault of his church ten days later.

He left instructions for the executors of his estate and wrote his epitaph himself.

It was to be put up on a plain marble tablet near the vestry door...

**JOHN NEWTON, Clerk,
Once an infidel and libertine,
A servant of slaves in Africa,
Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour,
JESUS CHRIST,
Preserved, restored, pardoned,
And appointed to preach the faith
He had long laboured to destroy."**

That's amazing – it is amazing Grace

That's what's so amazing about God's grace!

It can be yours

That's why I chose Hosea to become a role model for me. He was:

**Obedient to God
Loving his wife – as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it!
Loving his family – as entrusted to him for time and eternity!**

He's not a bad role model is he?

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