

Hosea 2

Verse 1

Say to your brothers, “Ammi,” and to your sisters, “Ruhamah.”

In chapter one the 2nd and 3rd children of Hosea were given the following names,

1. Lo-ruhamah, meaning “I will no longer take pity on the house of Israel”.
2. Lo-ammi, meaning “you are not My people, and I am not your God.”

But in verse 11 we learned that the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and this took place when Jews from all around the world accepted the Good News on the day of Pentecost in 28AD. After that event Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah were given the following names.

1. Ruhamah means "pitied"
2. Ammi means "my people"

The judgment of God that was upon the 10 northern tribes had turned into a blessing for those who accepted Christ as their savior and they were given a place in this New Kingdom. This is also why the term brothers and sisters are used in this verse.

This first verse would fit better at the end chapter 1, but the person who divided the books of the bible into chapters may have used a more random process than one might assume.

Verse 2

**² “Dispute with your mother, dispute,
Because she is not my wife, and I am not her husband;
But she must remove her infidelity from her face
And her adultery from between her breasts,**

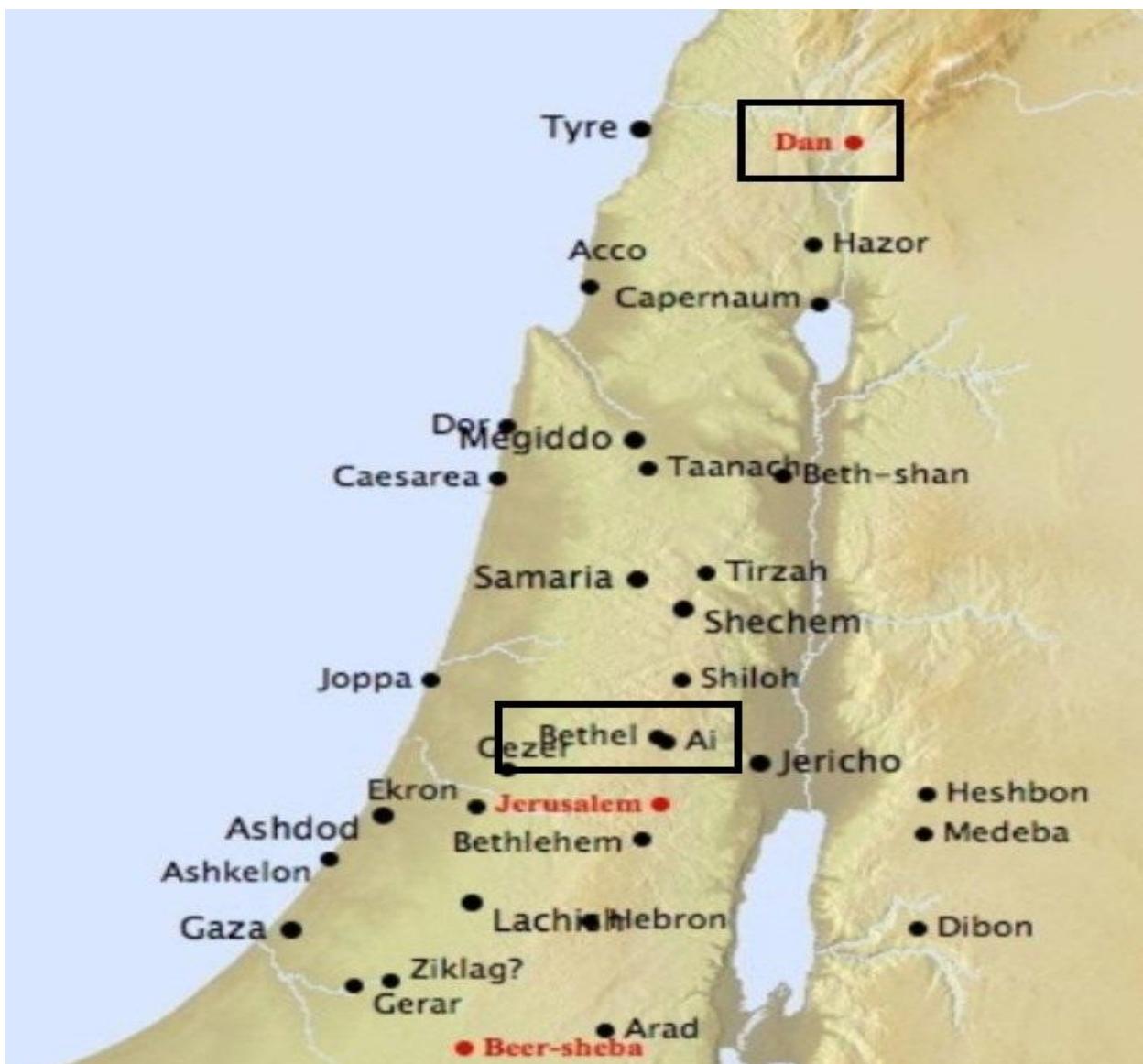
The husband here stands for Yahweh; and the wife represents the people of Israel. If Israel refuses to repent of their idolatry (adultery against God) God will be forced to divorce his wife (Israel). The Northern kingdom had rejected Him for the many false gods of the land and in doing so had broken the covenant between God and Israel. The marriage relationship (the covenant) must be kept by both parties and Israel was not willing to keep their part of the agreement.

Jeroboam, the first northern king of the divided kingdom, set up golden calves in the two cities of Bethel and Dan causing the people to forsake God.

See 1 Kings 12:28 - 31

²⁸ So the king consulted, and he made two golden calves; and he said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.” ²⁹ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. ³¹ And he made houses on high places, and appointed priests from all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.

See map 205



The sin of idolatry continued to be promoted by all of the succeeding kings of Israel but one king and his wife stand out as particularly reprehensible. Ahab & Jezebel made the worship of Baal the official religion of Israel. Ahab had shrines built for the worship of Baal and Jezebel supported hundreds of false priests and persecuted the prophets of God. She even sought the life of Elijah the prophet, one of the most respected prophets of the Old Testament. Their daughter Athaliah married Jehoram the king of Judah, and she promoted the same paganism in the tribe of Judah.

If the word divorce seems too strong of a word for what God was doing to Israel then it should be remembered that the only reason that a man or woman has for divorcing their mate is for adultery and that is exactly what God is accusing Israel of doing. God says that Israel must remove her infidelity from her face and her adultery from between her breasts. Maybe if more people saw their rejection of God as adultery perhaps they would reconsider.

Just to be clear, we know that God hates divorce.

See Malachi 2:16

¹⁶ “For I hate divorce,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with violence,” says the Lord of armies. “So be careful about your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”

Nevertheless, the Northern Kingdom had been warned about their idolatry many times over a period of 200 years (930 to 722 BC) but she would not repent of her sin. There is a law of reaping and sowing and that principle cannot be set aside indefinitely because there comes a point when sin must be dealt with for the sake of justice.

Verse 3

**³ Otherwise, I will strip her naked
And expose her as on the day she was born.
I will also make her like a wilderness,
Make her like desert land,
And put her to death with thirst.**

In a very real sense the nation of Israel was born in Egypt. Several hundred members of Abraham's family moved to Egypt in 1706 BC and grew to a staggering 2.5 million by 1446 BC when they left Egypt. If His wife, Israel, does not change her ways God will reduce her to her former position in the land of Egypt, a people of slavery and a people without a country.

Verse 4

**⁴ Also, I will take no pity on her children,
Because they are children of infidelity.**

At first glance someone might object to this verse because it sounds like Hosea is blaming the children for a sin that was committed by their mother but that is not what is being said here. Rather the children, after they had grown up and were responsible for their own actions, continued in the same sins as their parents. Many of these people continued to give lip service to the one true God but they loved to attend the immoral feasts of the pagan gods like Baal. The reason these feasts were immoral was because they sacrificed animals to a false god (Baal and Asherah) and then participated in sexual acts with "consecrated" or "sacred" persons associated with the temples of these false gods. This was a part of worshipping these false gods.

Verse 5

**⁵ For their mother has committed prostitution;
She who conceived them has acted shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
Who give me my bread and my water,
My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'**

Israel did not wait for customers like the ordinary prostitute, but rather they pursued their lovers. The "lovers" mentioned here were not just the Baals, the fertility gods of the Canaanites, but any number of gods from the surrounding nations.

The Israelites gave the pagan gods the thanks for providing all of their physical wants rather than the Lord who is the true giver of all good things. It was God who made Israel a nation and gave them great riches. When Israel captured the Promised Land from the Canaanites they inherited untold wealth in gold, silver, and bronze, herds of animals, clothing, houses and land. Much of this was passed down thru the generations that followed but somehow they forgot the God who gave all of this to them.

Verse 6

**⁶ Therefore, behold, I will obstruct her way with thorns,
And I will build a stone wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.**

Obstructing her way with thorns is reminiscent of the judgment God placed on Adam for his rebellion against God.

See Genesis 3:17 – 20

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

**Cursed is the ground because of you;
With hard labor you shall eat *from* it
All the days of your life.**

¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

Yet you shall eat the plants of the field;

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face

You shall eat bread,

Until you return to the ground,

Because from it you were taken;

For you are dust,

And to dust you shall return.”

God made the work that Adam was already doing more difficult (by the sweat of your face) by introducing thorns & thistles. Previous to his sin his work was enjoyable and fruitful but now it would be somewhat more tedious and less productive.

Israel would experience this same judgment because of her sin while she was yet in the Promised Land. This was done in the hope that she would see the error of her ways and repent before it was too late. It is a sad fact that God is often forced to punish individuals and nations because they refuse to listen to their creator.

Verse 7

⁷ And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not reach them;

And she will seek them, but will not find *them*.

Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband,

Because it was better for me then than now!’

The trouble with all these other gods is that they cannot help in a time of need and this life is full of difficult times. One would think that a nation that was rescued from slavery by great signs and miracles would not seek other gods but that was not the case with Israel. The nation that had been given the most from the Lord; miracles, the law and the prophets refused to see the error of their ways and did not return to the Lord.

God had hoped that disciplining Israel would cause them to miss the better times when they were in fellowship with Him but in the case of the Northern Kingdom that never seemed to work. The Northern Kingdom had whole heartily forsaken the Lord from day 1, when they chose to worship the golden calves set up by Jeroboam right after the kingdom was divided and they never looked back. The 10 tribes went into captivity and very little is heard of them after that time.

The Jews living in the Southern Kingdom were given addition time in the Promised Land because they had periods of time when they repented of their sin and turned back to the Lord. However, in time they became like their fellow Jews in the Northern Kingdom and they also lost the privilege of living in the Promised Land. However, the 70 years of captivity in Babylon taught them a lesson they would never forget. As a nation they never worshiped any god other than the Lord God. In the 1st century they did reject the son of God but that was because they didn't know the Father, not because they wanted to pursue some other god or gods.

Verses 8 - 9

⁸ **“Yet she does not know that it was I myself who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil,**

And lavished on her silver and gold,

Which they used for Baal.

⁹ **Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time**

And My new wine in its season.

I will also take away My wool and My flax

That I gave to cover her nakedness.

God has a right to be upset when He blesses people with all their needs and with plenty to spare and they refuse to acknowledge that it came from Him. This blindness comes from an unbelieving heart that doesn't want to acknowledge the truth.

See 2 Peter 3:3 - 7

³ **Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” ⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.**

⁶ **By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

Peter says scoffers will come who will “deliberately forget” two things:

1. The earth was formed out of water and by water.
2. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

Isn’t it ironic then that evolutionists “deliberately forget” these two facts when they teach the following tenets of their theory.

1. That the world was formed out of gas and dust.
2. That the global flood is a myth.

Unfortunately, many so called “Christian leaders” have been led astray and no longer teach the creation account as it is presented in Genesis 1 & 2. Therefore, many Christians don’t understand that evolution is **the complete opposite** of creation.

Evolution is a theory based on the assumption that God does not exist and therefore things can only come about by time, chance, and the laws of nature working on matter.

This “willful ignorance” caused the people of Israel to misuse God’s blessings. Rather than thanking God for their blessings and helping the poor, they used their wealth to build temples dedicated to Baal and other false gods and support the pagan priesthoods of these cults. Thus, the wealth which God had bestowed upon them which should have resulted in them honoring Him became the means of dishonoring Him.

Verse 10

¹⁰ **So now I will uncover her lewdness
Before the eyes of her lovers,
And no one will rescue her from My hand.**

See Isaiah 20:1 - 5

In the year that the commander came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him and he fought against Ashdod and captured it,² at that time the Lord spoke through Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go and loosen the sackcloth from your hips and take your sandals off your feet.” And he did so, going naked and barefoot.³ Then the Lord said, “Even as My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and symbol against Egypt and Cush,⁴ so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.⁵ Then they will be terrified and ashamed because of Cush their hope and Egypt their pride.

Here we see that Assyria led their captives, Egypt and Cush away naked and barefoot.

See map 210



This practice was used to shame a conquered nation and to demonstrate complete defeat.

Verse 11

**¹¹ I will also put an end to all her joy,
Her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths,
And all her festivals.**

The regular Sabbaths and annual festivals, such as Tabernacles, Pentecost, and Passover could not be observed in a foreign land for two reasons.

1. The weekly Sabbath could not be observed because the people who were deported became slaves of the nation that conquered them and they no longer had any rights.
2. The annual feasts had to be celebrated in Jerusalem and after 586 BC the temple and the city laid in ruins.

Verse 12

¹² **And I will destroy her vines and fig trees,**
Of which she said, 'They are my wages for prostitution
Which my lovers have given me.'
And I will turn them into a forest,
And the animals of the field will devour them.

When Israel was deported by the Assyrians only the very poorest in the land were left behind and most of Israel was occupied by foreigners. Therefore, Israel no longer owned her own vines and fig trees.

See 2 Kings 17:24

²⁴ **Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities.**

See map 215



At this time the people of Israel also had a problem with wild animals.

See 2 Kings 17:25

²⁵ **And at the beginning of their living there, they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them that were killing some of them.**

Verse 13

¹³ **I will punish her for the days of the Baals**
When she used to offer sacrifices to them
And adorn herself with her nose ring and jewelry,
And follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me,” declares the Lord.

It is obvious that God loved Israel and wanted the people to respond with thanksgiving and worship but instead they were infatuated with Baal, a pagan god that had no power of authority to help them. But how could Israel forget the God that made them a mighty nation and brought them out of Egypt. Well, that was many generations ago and the generations living now had not experienced the things that their fathers had seen and heard.

See Judges 2:6 - 10

⁶ **When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went, each one to his inheritance, to take possession of the land.** ⁷ **The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel.** ⁸ **Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110.** ⁹ **And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.** ¹⁰ **All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and another generation rose up after them who did not know the Lord, nor even the work which He had done for Israel.**

This inspired account tells us that having a personal experience (relationship) with God is very important. Every generation has to seek God and learn for themselves what it means to know the Lord. To be sure most of us will never see the miracles that God performed in the past but blessed are those who believe without seeing.

See John 20:29

²⁷ **Then He *said to Thomas, “Place your finger here, and see My hands; and take your hand and put it into My side; and do not continue in disbelief, but be a believer.”** ²⁸ **Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”** ²⁹ **Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you now believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”**

Verse 14

¹⁴ **“Therefore, behold, I am going to persuade her,
Bring her *into* the wilderness,
And speak kindly to her.**

Before God could take Israel into the Promised Land He had to take Israel out of Egypt and travel through a wilderness. The wilderness was a harsh land that could only be traversed with the helping hand of God. God spoke kindly to Israel by providing a cloud by day and fire by night to bring them to a place where He could destroy the enemy in a sea of water. The wilderness experience lasted longer than it should have because of the people's disobedience but God continued to speak kindly to them by providing all of their needs, including water, manna, quail, and their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

One might look at this and try to apply it to the 70 year captivity of Judah in Babylon but what are we to think about the Northern Kingdom. How could this be fulfilled in them? It seems more likely that this looks farther in the future when the church which include both kingdoms of Israel. God will make a new marriage covenant will the remnant of Israel (both the North and South) and all Gentile believers. Just as the old Israel was promised a land of their own, in the same manner the new bride will receive a glorious Promised Land with God in heaven forever. The need for this kind of interpretation will become more apparent in the following verses of this chapter.

Verse 15

¹⁵ **Then I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope.
And she will respond there as in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she went up from the land of Egypt.**

The valley of Achor was the place where the sin of Achan involved all of Israel in a disastrous defeat. However, after Achan was put to death, the same place became a door of hope in that it lead to a great victory which then opened up the entire land of Canaan for Israel.

The spiritual death of Israel, the large part that rejected God and went after false gods, became an opportunity for God to reunite believers from the Northern and Southern kingdoms along with many believing Gentiles into one group which became the church.

See Romans 11:17 - 21

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; ²¹ for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

Verses 16 -17

¹⁶ And it will come about on that day,” declares the Lord,
“That you will call Me my husband
And no longer call Me my Baal.
¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth,
So that they will no longer be mentioned by their names.

Baal had several meanings including master, lord, and even husband, all of which rightly applies to The Lord God. So why does God make the point that Israel will call Him “my husband” and no longer call Him my Baal. Much of Israel, those who were unbelievers, didn’t make a distinction between The Lord God and the god known as Baal.

If anyone is tempted to apply these verses to the Jews that returned to Jerusalem after their deportation to Babylon because they no longer mentioned Baal or any other god, then verse 18 will become a problem. Verses 16 and 18 both says “on that day”, and should be seen as the same time but it is impossible to apply verse 18 to the captives that returned from Babylon. Once we interpret verse 18 then we will know what time is referred to in verse 16.

Verse 18

¹⁸ On that day I will also make a covenant for them
With the animals of the field,
The birds of the sky,
And the crawling things of the ground.
And I will eliminate the bow, the sword, and war from the land,
And will let them lie down in safety.

When God says He will make a covenant with them it is clear that this refers to the time of Christ when the old covenant was done away with and a new covenant was made.

See Jeremiah 31:31- 34

³¹ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. ³³ “For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord: “I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember.”

Concerning the animals and the nations being at peace with one another it seems that this must be figurative language indicating the peace and tranquility that Christ brings during His ministry.

See Isaiah 1:1 – 5

**Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.**
**² The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.**
**³ And He will delight in the fear of the Lord,
And He will not judge by what His eyes see,
Nor make decisions by what His ears hear;**
**⁴ But with righteousness He will judge the poor,
And decide with fairness for the humble of the earth;
And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.**
**⁵ Also righteousness will be the belt around His hips,
And faithfulness the belt around His waist.**

Christ was a man of peace and it showed in all that He said and did. Some may argue that the Church is quite flawed compared to Christ but the followers of any leader are seldom as good as their teacher.

Verses 19 - 20

¹⁹ **I will betroth you to Me forever;**
Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice,
In favor and in compassion,
²⁰ **And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness.**
Then you will know the Lord.

The 5 words highlighted in yellow vary depending what version one is using.

The KJV has in lovingkindness and mercy instead of in favor and in compassion

¹⁹ **“I will betroth you to Me forever;**
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
²⁰ **I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,**
And you shall know the Lord.

NIV has in love rather than in favor or lovingkindness

¹⁹ **I will betroth you to me forever;**
I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,
in love and compassion.
²⁰ **I will betroth you in faithfulness,**
and you will acknowledge the Lord.

The betrothal here indicates a new marriage based on the New Covenant which is cauterized by righteousness, justice, love, compassion (mercy) and faithfulness.

Verses 21 - 22

²¹ **“And it will come about on that day that I will respond,” declares the Lord.**
“I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth,
²² **And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine, and to the oil,**
And they will respond to Jezreel.

In verse 21, “on that day” is used again, letting the reader know that the same time is indicated here as in verses 16 and 18 (The time of Christ).

When Christ comes there will be signs in the heavens and on earth that God has blessed all of mankind. This is a prelude to the second coming when God will create a new heavens and earth.

Verse 23

²³ I will sow her for Myself in the land.

I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion,

And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!'

And they will say, 'You are my God!'"

Paul quoted both this verse and Hosea 1:10 in Romans 9:23 - 26

²³ And *He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon objects of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,* ²⁴ *namely us, whom He also called, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles,* ²⁵ *as He also says in Hosea:*

"I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,'

And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'"

²⁶ "And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,'

There they shall be called sons of the living God."

Paul clearly saw the words of Hosea as a future prophesy about the coming of Jesus and the gentiles being added to the church.

Peter makes a similar observation in 1st Peter.

See 1 Peter 2:10.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

We should remember that we have the privilege of living after these events were fulfilled so we have a much clearer understanding of what was prophesized than the people of Hosea's time.