



Journey Into the Love of God

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Journey into the Love of God

A study based on the book of Hosea, particularly chapters 1-3 and chapter 6

Introduction

This little book, written from the perspective of a young Christian lady, will take you on a fascinating journey deep into the heart of God. Along this journey, Jill learns that no matter how far one may backslide or how deep a person or a nation may sink into sin, there is forgiveness with God because God is love. God goes to great lengths to manifest this love to those who are wayward and rebellious, and He longs to restore them. God's love is an everlasting love.

So put on your shoes, grab a walking stick, and bring along your Bible and a notebook and pen as you join Jill on a journey into the love of God, a journey which begins as a hard, uphill climb but ends in triumph and glory! God bless you as you read.

The Loving Husband and the Rebellious Wife

“It is twenty-two degrees.” Jane’s voice broke into Jill’s drowsy half dream.

“Mmmm,” she mumbled in reply. “I figured it was cold. The heat kept running.”

Jill did not move. She just lay under the warm, cozy covers while her sister turned up the heat. She prayed and thought for a few minutes. Finally, Jill rolled over - 7:22 a.m. She stretched and then began some sit-ups and other loosening-up exercises. It was time to get going.

Quickly, before the heat shut off, she jumped out of bed, got her things together, and went to get ready for the day.

Then she sought out a notebook for her Bible study. She had quite a few notebooks, but most of them were already used or being used. Jill settled on a pink composition notebook with pretty holographic patterns that seemed to change as the notebook was turned this way and that. It had been a birthday gift from Jane.

Jill had just finished reading the book of Hosea for her morning devotions. Oh, what treasure was in that book! It was a book of forgiveness, love, and hope. The love was unconditional, everlasting. It endured the waywardness and backslidings of rebellious Israel. It spanned time and extended into eternity. One day Israel, though she had rejected God’s love and run after other lovers, would be taken back into the loving arms of her waiting

Husband. God's forgiveness and love are unfathomable; Israel's salvation will one day be complete.

As Jane prepared pancakes for breakfast, she turned on a music CD. A woman's clear voice sang out, "Keep your eyes on Jesus." After this came a song full of the beauty of God's love. Next came a song about the loveliness of Jesus.

To this setting, Jill began to restudy the book of Hosea. The verses had already been color-coded according to subject or concept. Under the name of the Book HOSEA and above the first chapter, Jill had written, "Verses 10,11 - Prophecy of the salvation of Israel. How great is God's mercy!"

The word of the Lord came to Hosea. Hosea apparently lived to be an old man. His ministry spanned the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and also the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel. (See Hosea 1:1)

God's word to Hosea began with what must have seemed to him a difficult and heart-sickening command. Hosea must go take a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms. Hosea had to take a wife that he knew he must love unconditionally, even though she would run after other lovers and have children that belonged to other fathers.

Why? *"For the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD."* (v.2)

God wanted Israel to see how treacherously she had dealt with her Husband. Israel had departed from her faithful Lover to follow after other "lovers." Her children were full of thoughts - vain thoughts, worldly

philosophies, false religions. Their thoughts were controlled by the god of this world. They were not the children of their mother's husband.

Yet God remained a faithful Husband. His patient arms were stretched out still, waiting for His wandering wife to return to Him so He could embrace her and hold her safe, welcoming her back with His undying and unconditional love. (See Hosea 14:1,4-7)

Jill knew she often took her eyes off Jesus. The struggles of life, the daily activities, the countless temptations all lured her into a world of worry and frustration, a world whose philosophy is controlled by the god of this world. But always, no matter how rebellious or disobedient she had been, she could turn around and run back to her Saviour. There He would be waiting, arms stretched out still, ready to forgive her completely and welcome her back to Himself unconditionally. She was always completely accepted as His beloved.

An Obedient Son

“It’s thirty-three degrees and snowing,” Jane said.

“It is?” Jill answered in surprise. It was 7:03, but Jill had been awake since 6:24. The Lord had given her a very good night’s rest, allowing her to sleep from 11:15 to 6:24 without interruption. And her dreams had been pleasant too. She was very thankful.

When Jill awoke at 6:24, she was pleased to hear drip, drip, drip, drip. The thought occurred to her, *When is a continual dropping on a very rainy day a good thing? When the forecast calls for freezing rain.* Again, she was very grateful. It was thirty-three and sleeting when she went to bed, and she had prayed that the power would not go out. God was merciful.

Now Jill was ready to set out on the next leg of her journey into the love of God.

Hosea 1:3-7 were verses that made Jill’s heart sad. They picture Israel’s rebellion and the judgment God would pour out upon them in correction. How grieved God must have been as his people turned away from Him.

“³So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. ⁴And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.” (vs. 3-4)

This must have been very difficult for Hosea. Nevertheless, he obeyed the Lord and took a wife he knew would be unfaithful to him. Then the wife gave birth to a son whom Hosea named Jezreel at the commandment of the

Lord. Hosea would love this son and care for him. But every time he looked at his son or called out his name, he would be reminded that Israel had sinned against the Lord, that God was angry with Israel and was going to destroy the kingdom of Israel.

Hosea would also have to live with the stigma of his son's name. His son was a sign to Israel, a sign of God's anger and judgment. Jill could imagine the criticism and threatening that Hosea must have endured. The very sight of his son or the sound of Jezreel's name would stir up rebellious hearts and bring cruel mocking.

“And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.” (v. 5) Hosea's son was a sign to Israel that they would fall before their enemies, that they were helpless and powerless because they had departed from their God.

Yet Hosea obeyed God. And God would test him even further. *“⁶And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. ⁷But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.”* (vs. 6-7)

Again, Jill could just imagine the disgrace. Now Hosea had a son and a daughter. Surely he loved them both with a tender, fatherly love. Yet Jezreel was a sign of judgment, of God's anger and chastisement. The daughter Loruhamah was a sign that God would no more have mercy on the house of

Israel, but He would have mercy on the house of Judah. Every time Hosea looked at his children, he was reminded that God would chastise Israel but would bless Judah.

Just think what people would say! “Hosea, you think you know everything, don’t you? God is a loving God. Israel is God’s people just as much as Judah. How can you say God will judge Israel and spare Judah? Do you think God plays favorites?” Yet none would consider that the judgment was just, that it was chastisement for their sins, that they deserved it because they had departed from God and had gone off to fill up themselves with their own doings and with the world’s pleasures.

This was a sad place to end her study, but Jill had run out of time. She marveled at the courage of Hosea. He must have had a great trust in God if he obeyed under such difficult circumstances. He must have had a close relationship with God. He must have understood that God loved Him and would take care of him like a faithful Father. And Hosea returned that love by being an obedient son.

Thank You, God for this encouraging example of obedience in the face of difficulty. Thank you that even in difficulty, we can be assured of Your great love.

A Forgiving Father, A Redeeming Saviour

A beautiful morning, thought Jill. It was twenty-three degrees and everything sparkled in the sunlight like jewels because of the heavy frost. She and Jane had forgotten to bring in the clothes from off the line the afternoon before. Jill was sure that they would be frozen stiff. She chuckled at the thought.

Today she looked forward to studying the last four verses of Hosea chapter 1. Verses eight and nine contained words from God which must have brought great sorrow to Hosea.

“⁸Now when she [Hosea’s wife] had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. ⁹Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”

It was not that Israel had simply forgotten God. Israel had rejected God and God could not claim them for His own as a nation.

Now Hosea had three children by an unfaithful wife. Hosea’s wife and children were each a sign to Israel -

1. Gomer (wife) - Israel had been unfaithful to God
2. Jezreel (son) - God was angry and would judge Israel for her sins.
3. Loruhamah (daughter) - God would take away His mercy from Israel; but God would have mercy on Judah and would save them
4. Loammi (son) - Israel had rejected God. Now God would reject Israel from being His people. They would not be His people, and He would not be their God.

Hosea's whole life was a living sign to Israel, a stigma of judgment and rejection, a reproach and a shame among his own people. How difficult this must have been for Hosea! How heavy-hearted and weary he must have felt. He loved God and wanted to live for Him, but this was so hard. How much more could he endure?

Nevertheless, God remembered Hosea because He knew Hosea's human frame was but dust. He had pity on Hosea. When it seemed Hosea's heart would break, and he did not know how much more he could take, God bent down in pity and encouraged him with words of comfort and joy.

With excitement, Jill read verses ten and eleven. God was about to speak the promise that one day Israel would be redeemed and would be taken back unto Himself, fully restored as His people and as sons of the living God.

“¹⁰Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. ¹¹Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.”

Such joy thrilled her soul that Jill thought she could stand on the tip-toes of her left foot and spin around in delight. God was going to forgive Israel. God was going to take Israel back unto Himself. God was going to restore Israel to the position of being His people and sons of the living God. And God

was going to bring peace between Israel and Judah and unite them once again as one people under one head. God was going to save Israel for ever.

Oh, what love! Was there ever love to equal the love of God? Oh, what love!

A Pleading Husband, part 1

“The windows of heaven are open, the blessings are falling today; There’s joy, joy, joy, in my heart since Jesus has come in to stay.” Jill was thrilled that this song came into her mind as her brain fog began to lift from a good night’s sleep. Her dreams had been a little odd, so these words calmed her mind and brought happiness to her heart. *“That is the only Source of real joy,”* Jill thought, *“Jesus Christ.”*

This morning Jill would study Hosea 2:1-5. These were sad verses, verses that told of the heartbreak of Hosea over his wayward wife. His great sorrow represented the heartbreak of God over wayward Israel.

“¹Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah. ²Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; ³Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. ⁴And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. ⁵For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.”

Hosea’s wife had played the harlot. Once more, Jill could imagine the stigma. How ashamed Hosea must have felt as others looked at him and said, “The prophet’s wife is a harlot”! How this must have damaged his reputation as a minister of God’s word! But even this was a sign to Israel that she had left

her Lover to go after other “lovers.” Israel had “played the harlot” with other gods and brought shame to the name of her God among the heathen round about her. Perhaps people said, “Israel’s God must not take very good care of her. She is running after other gods.” Israel damaged the reputation of her Husband among the heathen, when she went to pursue after other gods.

Because his wife had despised his love and care, Hosea was going to take from her the good things he had provided her. Hosea’s wife had had children by other men. Hosea would not provide for them, they were not his children.

Instead of being grateful for Hosea’s love and being content with the things he had provided for her welfare, Hosea’s wife ran after other lovers. She was not happy with the food and clothes he had provided for her, so she sold her body in return for dainty meats and rich, delicate clothing.

Israel was doing the same to her Husband. Israel had despised God’s love and care. They taught their children to serve other gods. They followed the heathen nations around them in order to increase their material gain. They were not content with the food God gave them or with the clothing God provided for them. Israel despised God’s provision; it just was not good enough for them. They wanted fancier clothes, richer food, more wealth.

Therefore, God would take away His provision from Israel -- the clothes, the food, the other material things. Israel’s children were not His children, so He would not provide for them. This sounds cruel, but it is really another manifestation of God’s love. God wanted Israel to see that their wealth, their food, their clothing, and their daily needs were not really being provided by the

nations around them. Israel was God's wife, and He was taking care of her. Without Him, she and her children would be desolate and ashamed. There was no other means of provision for them but through Him.

It was God's way of pleading with His wife, God's way of saying, "Come back! I love you! Come back!"

And Hosea, as God's son, loved his wife too. And he called to her, "Come back! I love you! Come back!"

Jill knew that Jesus' love was just like this. He had espoused to Himself God's church. She was a beautiful, lovely wife; and He had paid for her with His own blood. When she goes astray; when her members, the Christians, are disobedient and despise His love, He pleads with them, "Come back! I love you! Come back!"

Oh what love! There is none other that can be compared to it!

A Pleading Husband, part 2

Another rainy winter morning, but Jill was pleased to hear the rain. The forecast had called for freezing rain with ice accumulations of 1 tenth of an inch or greater. But it was thirty-four degrees and raining steadily. God is a kind God.

Jill pondered this kindness as she began to study the next section of Hosea 2, verses 6 - 13.

“⁶Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. ⁷And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. ⁸For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. ⁹Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. ¹⁰And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. ¹¹I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. ¹²And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. ¹³And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD.”

These verses were full of interesting concepts. Hosea's wife had run after other lovers, but she was his wife, and he loved her. She did not belong to these other lovers; she belonged to him. Hosea determined that he would go after her. He would block her paths and hedge up her way so that she would not be able to find her other lovers.

In the same way, God loved Israel. Israel had despised His love and had gone after other lovers, thinking these lovers would give her bigger, fancier, richer things than God had given her. God had given Israel everything she needed; yet, Israel was not content. She thought God had not given her enough and that what God had given her was not good enough. So she went to seek after bigger, better, richer things. In doing so, she despised her Husband's goodness.

Yet God loved her, she belonged to Him. God would go after Israel and make her way hard and thorny and steep. She would weary herself trying to find her lovers. Her despising of her good Husband, who had provided all things for her, would bring her only frustration.

God loves His people. He sacrificed His only begotten Son for them. It grieves His heart when His people despise His love and provisions and think that what He has given them is not good enough. God is very sad when His bride, which He purchased with His own blood, thinks that she can find greater love and better provision from someone else.

God does everything He can to keep His people from following after other lovers. He makes the way to their sinful pleasures hard. He blocks up the way

so that His ungrateful people cannot even find the things they thought would be better than what He had provided. God loves His people too much to let them enjoy sin and rebellion. They will not be happy when they are backslidden. They will be miserable and frustrated.

Jill was a Christian. She had trusted in the shed blood of Jesus Christ to wash away all her sin. Therefore, God was her Husband too. She was part of the bride of Christ. When she pondered this great love her Husband had for her, she imagined herself stretching out her arms trustingly to Him. And she imagined His strong and mighty arms folding her close to His heart in His loving embrace. This loving God was her Husband! Oh, what love!

A Pleading Husband, part 3

A misty morning, but not so chilly. Jill hoped the sun would come out. She loved it when the sun broke through the fog. It made Jill's heart thrill with excitement to watch it disperse and see the sunshine flood the earth about her.

This morning Jill was hungry. Also, she still had left-overs from her bad headache the day before, and her brain seemed to be a bit foggy. But she was determined to study the Bible. God's Word is like sunlight, very powerful sunlight that can break through the gloom and disperse the heaviness of the foggiest brain. God's word can fill the heart with light. Psalm 119:130 says, *"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."*

In the book of Hosea, God was revealing His love to Jill. Hosea had provided for his wife everything that was necessary to meet her needs. He was a picture of Israel's faithful Husband who had provided all for Israel. Israel did not lack one good thing.

God had given Israel corn and wine and oil and had multiplied her gold and silver. He cared for her material needs and made her rich. Yet Israel was not content with God's provision. She went after other lovers and tried to find pleasure and happiness and good things apart from God. He also provided for her spiritual needs. He loved her and gave her everything she needed to live a godly life.

Israel thought her lovers were giving her corn and oil and wine and gold and silver. She did not know that God was providing these things. And Israel's other lovers were taking these good things and preparing them for Baal, that is,

for other gods. The things God was providing for her were being used to honor other gods. *“Therefore,”* said God, *“will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.”* (Hosea 2:9)

Israel had despised her God’s goodness. The things He had provided for her were being used for other lovers. They were being offered to other gods because Israel was not thankful to her true Lover. Therefore, God would take away all His good things which He had given her. He would not allow these provisions to be given to other lovers who did not really care for her but were only covetous of the things her true Lover had given her. After they took away her good things, Israel’s false lovers sacrificed them to their own gods. They did not really care for Israel but only “loved” her for what they could get out of her. They were jealous of her beauty and wealth.

But God was also jealous of Israel. He wanted Israel to know that these lovers did not care for her. He would take away her provisions and leave her afraid and destitute; cold and naked; and ashamed before her enemies. He would also take away her joy and laughter and stop all her religious activities, feasts, and ceremonies.

None of Israel’s lovers, in whom she trusted, would help her. When God withdrew His hand of blessing, none of her other lovers would deliver her out of God’s hand. They would despise and reject her because they would receive no more benefits from her. She would be of no further use to them.

God would destroy Israel's vines and fig trees which Israel thought her lovers had given her. No person would be able to enjoy these things; God would give them to the beasts of the field.

Israel had gone after Baalim (other gods). She had forgotten about God. God would take away her incense and remove from her the jewels and the earrings she had worn to attract her lovers.

Wearing her jewels to entice other lovers was an act of ungratefulness on Israel's part. The purpose of these jewels was to beautify the bride for her Husband. In the Bible, earrings were either a sign of bondage or a sign of relationship such as sister/brother, niece/uncle, or husband/wife. How sad God must have felt that Israel had taken her beautiful jewels and earrings which said to others, "I belong to God; He is my Husband," and used these things to seduce her other lovers.

God still loved Israel, so He determined what He must do. Israel refused to listen when God pleaded with her to come back, so God would take away everything He had provided for her. The corn, oil, wine, wool and flax to cover her nakedness, joy and laughter, religious ceremonies and new moons and feasts, and her vines and her fig trees would all be removed. Then, when Israel had nothing and was absolutely destitute, and no one would help her, Israel would say, "*I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.*" (Hosea 2:7b)

Oh how happy God would be! For even in His chastisement upon Israel, He was showing her His love. He was helping her to see that her other "lovers"

did not really love her. They only wanted to take advantage of her. God was wooing Israel back to Himself. He was showing her that in Him could be found all good things, and that she could have no good thing apart from God. He wanted Israel to forsake her other lovers and trust only in His everlasting love.

Jill was happy. This same God, who loved Israel, loved her too. He was her Husband, her true Lover. Jill belonged to God. No matter what she did, God would still love her; and He would do everything He could do to woo her back to Himself. God loved her with an everlasting love. Was there ever any love like unto God's love?

A Renewed Relationship; A Restored Relationship

A new day. It was wet and chilly, but Jill still felt a fresh enthusiasm. Excitement was building in her as she realized that, in less than twenty-four hours, a new year would begin. Jill hoped it would be a year of refreshing, a year in which her heart and mind would be renewed and filled again with zeal for the Lord.

Even the verses Jill was studying this morning seemed to symbolize newness. They showed a loving husband drawing his wayward wife back to himself. They told about a repentant wife rejoicing in the restoration of her fellowship with her husband. Once again the husband's favor would be shown to the wife. He would restore to her that which had been taken away, and she would sing of him with delight just as she had in her youth.

Here are these happy words from Hosea 2:14-17, *"¹⁴Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. ¹⁷For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name."*

God was sad when Israel went after other lovers. He took away her corn, wine, and oil; her flax and wool with which she made her clothes; her gold and silver; and her fields and vineyards. God hedged up her way with thorns

so that she could not find her other lovers. Israel was left hungry, naked, destitute, and ashamed. She had no more hope in her other lovers.

Now God would draw Israel to Himself. He would allure her into the wilderness, where He could be alone with her. There He would tell her how much He loved her, and there He would show her all the wonderful things He had prepared for her.

He would also give her vineyards and restore her hope. And there she would sing as she had sung in her youth, when she came up out of Egypt. Her day of restoration would be a day of joy, just like her day of salvation.

Jill's heart felt warmed as she thought of these things. She was a Christian. God was her Husband. No matter what she did, she still belonged to Him. He loved her!

What if she were to go astray and allow the idols of this world to draw her away from following God? Would God do all He could to bring her back? Would He take away every pleasure these idols could bring, and leave her heart sore and hopeless? When she had no more hope in the idols of the world, would God then allure her back to Himself? Yes! He would draw her far away from all that had enticed her. He would restore to her His favor, her joy, and her hope. The day of her restoration would be a day of joy, just like the day of her salvation. She would sing with happiness once again.

Jill's thoughts turned back to Israel. What a change would take place in Israel after her restoration! *“And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that*

thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali." Israel would call God by His real name. She would no longer mix her idol worship with the worship of JEHOVAH. In fact, God would take the name of the false gods right out of her mouth. She would remember them no more. She would only remember the name of the Lord her God.

Jill was happy for Israel, and she rejoiced for herself and for every other Christian as well, for they all belonged to God. If any of them were wayward but later returned unto the Lord, He would receive them. He would take away their desire for worldly pleasures, and their longing after sinful, worthless things; and He would restore their fellowship with Him. They would sing and speak his name with joy, for all their worldly idols would be remembered no more.

God will never forsake His bride -- neither Israel, nor the church. Any of His wayward ones can return unto their Lover. And when they do, restoration of fellowship, joy, and God's favor will be complete. There will never again be any more remembrance of their sin. God will receive them unto Himself unconditionally. Oh, what love!

A Renewed Peace and Security

January first! Jill felt her whole body tingle with the thrill that a new year had come! The old year was past, and now it was time for a fresh start. This first day of the year was a very chilly morning - about sixteen degrees. Jill was glad it was warm inside. It was quiet and cozy as she sat in her bed. It was peaceful and sweet as she communed with her God. She knew He was loving her, and she almost felt as if she could snuggle up to His side and hide there.

As she pondered this blessing of God, she began to study verses 18-23 of Hosea chapter two. These were words that filled Jill with wonder. In verses 14-17, God tells of Israel's joy as He restores her relationship to Him. In verses 18-20, God explains that He will renew Israel's peace and security.

When Israel was out of favor with God, He had taken away all her good and pleasant things. He had hedged up her way with thorns so she could not find her other lovers. Israel had been left hungry, naked, and alone. No doubt she was very afraid. But God promised, *"¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹And 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. ²⁰I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. ²¹And 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; ²²And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. ²³And 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.”

Jill could picture the scene. Here God will be with His bride in a quiet place, far away from other people and from things that would distract Israel’s attention from Him. He will have turned the wilderness into a place of fertile vineyards, a place full of hope. How Israel would sing because God had restored her joy!

Now God would restore her peace. The beasts of the field would not harm those who dwelt in the land. The birds would not invade their fields; and the “creeping things of the ground” would not eat their crops and destroy their increase. Israel could go outside safely and farm productively with hope, knowing that God would bless and give them much increase.

Also, God would take away all fear of danger from man. War would cease for God would break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth. No one would have to stay up all night to guard the city. Everyone would lie down and sleep in safety because there would be no more war.

And Israel would have great security. God’s restoration of her relationship to Him as His bride would be complete. He would betroth her unto Himself for ever. Never again would she be unfaithful to Him and follow after other lovers. Never again would she leave Him. He would betroth her unto

Himself in righteousness, in judgment, in lovingkindness, and in mercies. God would forget all her unfaithfulness, and nothing would ever come between them again for ever and for ever. *“I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.”*

In her mind, Jill could picture herself in Heaven. She was saved. She was a child of God. On earth she may disobey and wander off after her own desires, but God would chasten her and plead with her. Always she had to watch for danger and be on guard for enemies that desired to destroy her soul.

But one day God was coming for her, coming to take her unto Himself for ever. Away she would go to live with Him in His beautiful home that He had prepared for her. He would embrace her in His arms, and she would see His face. She would be His for ever! No beast would ever frighten her. No insect would ever bite her or crawl on her or eat her garden. No other human being would ever harm her.

Jill would be safe in the arms of her Saviour, for ever. She would know her Lord perfectly, even as He knows her now.

Now, Jill has forgiveness of sins and has salvation. But one day she will experience a joy, a peace, a safety, and a knowledge of her Lord that she cannot even imagine now. She will be wrapped in the arms of her Husband. She will be His for ever, and for ever. Never a love equals this love! This love is perfect and everlasting. Oh, what love!

A Complete and Pure Bride

Jill shivered a little in the early morning chill. The heat had not quite warmed up the house when she wriggled out of bed, but her heart was full of excitement as she anticipated the next part of God's love story to Israel. Tingles of joy ran through Jill as she reviewed the study she had just completed from Hosea 2:18-20. She was almost afraid to start a new study lest she lose the wonderful feeling of peace and happiness that was welling up in her heart, but she knew that the next three verses were full of wonder as well. She had already *looked* at verses 21-23; now she would *study* them in more depth. *"²¹And 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; ²²And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. ²³And 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."*

Jill did not fully understand these verses. The words paint pictures with meaning far beyond what she was able to comprehend, but she did understand that they were a prophecy.

One day God was going to extend the blessings of His everlasting love beyond Israel to the Gentile nations. He would reach out in His mercy to them and open up the invitation for them to be His people. One day His glory would be revealed to all the earth. His Husbandly arms would open to receive all who

would believe on Him, and He would accept them in the beloved* and welcome them as His bride.

This extension of God's Husbandly blessing would begin when Jesus was born on this earth. Gentiles could be saved before Jesus' birth, but no one understood the great mystery that God was about to unfold. Jesus would break down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles and make them both one.

The law of commandments, given by God to Israel, separated Israel from the Gentiles. Christ came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. By fulfilling the law, Christ abolished in His flesh, "*the enmity, even the law of commandments,*" which had made a wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. He broke down that middle wall of partition and made them both one in Himself by His own blood on the cross.¹

The offer of salvation and the blessings of a marriage relationship with Christ were extended to the Gentiles when Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. He purchased the church to Himself with His own blood and cleansed it with the washing of water by the word so that He might present it to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Christ wanted a pure bride, undefiled, and beautiful. Christ himself chose this bride. He loved her and He gave Himself for her, shed His blood for her, and purchased her. He took His Word and cleansed her from all impurities. He chose her garments and ornaments. Nothing but complete perfection would do. Christ loved her more than any man could ever love his

bride. Christ's love was perfect. This is a beautiful mystery, the mystery of Christ and the church.²

Both Jews and Gentiles are in the church, and both are accepted in Christ's beloved.³ The middle wall of partition is broken down between them. They are one through the blood of Christ. The believing Gentiles can rejoice with God's people because God is now the God of the Jews and of the Gentiles.

Perhaps before, it was said of the Gentiles, "They are not God's people," but now God is going to call them, "my people." Perhaps before, it was said of the Gentiles, "They are not part of God's beloved," but now God would accept them in His beloved. Perhaps before, it was said of the Gentiles, "They serve other gods," but now the Gentiles can say to God, "Thou art my God," and it will be said of them that they are "the children of the living God."

Jesus will come one day to catch His bride away to live with Him for ever. He will return for His bride whom He will present to Himself as "*a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*" (Ephesians 5:27) She will be a perfect bride.

And one day God will come for Israel who is now scattered among the nations. He will gather her unto Himself and sow her unto Himself in the earth. They will no more be removed. God will restore to Israel her former glory and give unto her corn and wine and oil.

There will be great rejoicing, from the earth and its bounty, all the way to throne of God. No more will there be any sin or sorrow, hunger or nakedness,

nor want of any kind. Everything will be perfect, and everyone will be complete in Christ. Christ and His beloved will dwell together for ever and ever and ever.

Oh, Jill could not describe the feeling that welled up within her heart! “Thank you, thank you, thank you,” she said to God. “Thank you for such perfect love.”

¹*Ephesians 2:13-16*

²*Ephesians 5:25-32*

³*Ephesians 1:6*

*For further study on this subject, please refer to the following passages of Scripture: *Psalm 22:27; 68:31; Jeremiah 31:27-37; Malachi 1:11; Romans 3:29,30; 9:25,26; 11:30-32; 15:7-10;*

A Husband's Undying Love

Jill heard her sister Jane open that back door and look out. "Have we drowned yet?" Jill joked drowsily.

"We have an inch and three tenths."

"Is that all? It seemed like it rained all night."

It was dark, rainy, gloomy, and wet with occasional rumbles of thunder. How this setting seemed to contrast to the bright, cheerful promises Jill was about to study in Hosea chapter three. Yet, perhaps God and Hosea suffered much trouble, darkness, gloominess, and even resistance in bringing their beloved back to themselves.

"¹Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. ²So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: ³And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. ⁴For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: ⁵Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." (Hosea 3)

God asked Hosea to do a hard thing. His wife had left him for other "lovers" and the "pleasures" such a life style brings. She had committed

adultery. Under the Jewish law, she should have been stoned to death. Yet, God told Hosea to love her and to go get her and take her back to himself. This did indeed seem to be a dark, gloomy task. Hosea had to go find his wife who had left him. Apparently she was living with another man but was not married to him. It also appeared that she did not love Hosea or have any desire to return to him. Yet, he was to go get her.

Hosea's wife was a picture of Israel who forsook the Lord and went after other gods. Instead of the wonderful vineyards and pure fruit of the vine God was offering to her, Israel loved flagons of wine. She enjoyed her strong drinks and her drunkenness. She did not love the LORD and had no desire to return to Him. But God was going to go after her and seek her and bring her back to Himself. He would forgive her and love her.

Hosea's wife did not want to go back to Hosea. It seems that her new "lover" did not want to let her go back either. But Hosea loved his wife so much that he was willing to pay for her. He gave money and food to redeem her to himself.

God loved Israel in the same way. Israel had rejected Him. She had followed after other gods, but in reality she was serving the god of this world, the Devil. The Devil did not want to let her go; but God was going to pay for her. It would not be just some food and money. It would be the life and blood of His only begotten Son. This was a high price, but God was willing to pay it because of the love He had for Israel.

Hosea brought his wife home and spoke lovingly to her. He pleaded with her to abide with him and not play the harlot and not seek another's love. In turn, he would be there for her. He would be pure, and his love would be for her alone.

God would do this for Israel. He would show her goodness and love. In the latter days, she will return to Him and fear Him and delight in His goodness. Israel will seek the LORD their God, and Jesus will be their king. They will not seek any other gods or love the "pleasures" of sinful things. And God will love them and lavish His goodness upon them, and they will fear Him and His goodness. God will be there for them for ever.

Thank You, God. Thank You that Your love is everlasting and that Israel will one day return to You. You will forgive her and love her, and she will be with You for ever.

Thank You for Your undying love.

A Healing and Reviving Love

“Time to get up!” came Jane’s voice. Jill had not even heard her sister coming. “Ummmmm!” she groaned. It was a damp, chilly morning, one of those that could be felt in every bone of the body. Jill crawled out of bed and stumbled into the kitchen where she poured some water into a cup and heated it in the microwave. It was not long before she had a steaming cup of tea in hand. With this she headed back to her room and got out her Bible and notebook. As the soothing sips of tea warmed her body, the comforting words of Scripture warmed her soul.

“¹Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. ²After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. ³Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hosea 6:1-3)

Jill studied these verses through and pondered them. She was not quite sure what they meant. She had some ideas but thought she would check out a few commentaries. The commentaries agreed with her thoughts, and one of them added a thought that she had not considered.

In verse one, Hosea appeals to the children of Israel, *“Come, and let us return unto the LORD.”* Israel was in trouble because she had forgotten the Lord. She had left Him to serve other gods and follow after worldly pleasures. Because of their rebellion, God had chastened them. Hosea describes this

chastening by saying God had torn Israel. According to Strong's Concordance, this means God had torn her to pieces, that is, "to tear to pieces; to ravin; to rend to pieces." Ravin means "to obtain food by violence, plunder, or prey." God came at Israel in violence and tore her apart just like a wolf would tear apart His prey.

But God not only knows how to rend in pieces; He knows how to put all the pieces back together and bind them up and heal them so that it will be as if there had never been anything wrong. He is the Great Physician, the Master Surgeon. Nothing is beyond His skill. In anger God tore apart His people for their transgression, but in mercy and love He was ready to repair and heal them the instant Israel repented.

God had smitten Israel. For her sins, He had punished and sorely wounded her; but now He was ready to bind her up the moment she returned unto Him. He had the healing balm; the soothing compresses were ready, and the clean cloths, to wrap up the wounds. Though He slay Israel, yet He would revive her and raise her up again to live in His sight.

God's love is a healing love, and He is ready to heal the moment the wayward one repents. His skill knows no bounds, and His work is perfect. God is love.

A Redeeming and a Rescuing Husband

Jill looked out the window. Big, beautiful flakes of snow drifted gently down from the sky. Falling snow had always fascinated Jill. She could look up into the clouds for hours and watch it come down. It was so soft and so quiet, yet it was one of the great manifestations of the power of God. *“For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth.”* (Job 37:6a) The whiteness and purity of it reminded Jill of her salvation, for it was God who had washed her and made her whiter than the snow. (See Psalm 51:7) God had sent the snow to prepare Jill’s heart for her Bible study that morning. As she pondered the Scriptures, she would once again be awed by the great power of God and by the completeness of His salvation.

“¹Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. ²After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. ³Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hosea 6:1-3)

Again Jill pondered these three verses. They seemed to hold thrilling prophecies and words of hope and joy. Yet, they seemed to be a mystery beyond the reaches of her finite mind.

Once more she looked to see what some commentators had to say about them. This prophecy, like so many others in Scripture, was a double prophecy. God had torn Israel, smitten them for their sins. But though this punishment

seemed so severe and so terrible and so complete, it was not the end. In three days God could restore Israel to the forgiveness, blessing, and prosperity she once knew. Though Israel was now in dreadful straits, she would one day be renewed, restored, and raised up to holiness and perfection.

This prophecy also speaks of the Messiah. He would die for Israel's sins and for the sins of the whole world. He would be buried, and He would rise again the third day according to the Scriptures. (See I Corinthians 15:4) It is interesting to note that Hosea 6:2 is the only place in the Old Testament that prophecies that the Messiah will rise again the third day.*

This passage of Scripture can be compared with Isaiah 52, 53, and 54, which describe the sufferings of the Messiah. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to be the Substitute for us on Calvary. There He would bear the sins of all mankind. (See also John 3:16)

The Messiah would be torn and smitten. His visage would be marred more than any man. No one would even be able to recognize Him. He would be despised and rejected, wounded, and considered to be smitten of God. He would be bruised for our iniquities, chastised to obtain our freedom, beaten to provide our healing.

The Messiah would suffer imprisonment, judgment, and death. Yet the pleasure of the LORD would prosper in His hand. What is the pleasure of the LORD? It is that Jesus would bear our iniquities, make intercession for our transgressions, and bring us justification by His righteousness. When this offering for sin was complete, the LORD prolonged His days. He was raised up

again and now has the pleasure of seeing His seed, the saved and redeemed, be born again into the family of God.

Not only do these verses speak of the Messiah who will come to redeem His people, both Jews and Gentiles, from their sins, but they also speak of the Messiah who will come to redeem Israel unto Himself for ever.

Three dispensations must pass before this occurs -- the age of the law (Israel), the age of the church, and the time of Jacob's trouble (the Great Tribulation). The age of law has already been completed, and we are now in the age of the church. At the end of the third dispensation, Jesus will come again to Israel, and Israel will believe on Him. He will not come to bring trouble but good tidings of peace and everlasting salvation.

“⁴And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ⁵And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. ⁶And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: ⁷But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.” (Zechariah 14:4-7)

When Jesus comes after the time of Jacob's trouble, Israel will be afraid. They will see His great power and will flee to the valley to hide. However, Jesus will not be coming to judge Israel, but to rescue her from the oppression of her enemies. He will be bringing her good tidings of good. *"⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! ⁸Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion."* (Isaiah 52:7,8)

Zechariah explains more.

"⁸And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. ⁹And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. ¹⁰All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. ¹¹And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. ¹²And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. ¹³And it shall come to pass in that day, that a

great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. ¹⁴And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. ¹⁵And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. ¹⁶And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”
(Zechariah 14:8-16)

No, Jesus will not be coming to bring terror to Israel, but to Israel's enemies. As for Israel, her Messiah will come to restore her unto Himself as His bride for ever.

This is God's promise. *“⁵For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. ⁶For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. ⁷For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. ⁸In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.”*
(Isaiah 54:5-8)

Jill sat still and let these words fill her being. They were overwhelming! She could hardly take it in.

Jill knew that this last prophecy mentioned here was for Israel alone, but it still filled her heart with awe. How God loves His wife! No matter what Israel has done or may do in the future, God still loves her. God will bring her good tidings, peace, and salvation. God will gather her unto Himself with great mercies. With everlasting kindness He will restore her, and there she will be -- His bride, by His side, for ever.

Jill could not fathom such a God, a God who can punish sin and destroy the wicked in His anger, yet a God whose forgiveness is so full that He can restore the wayward one completely and remember his sin no more.

God's kindness is everlasting; His joy knows no end, and His salvation is for all eternity. Oh, to think on these things! There is no God like unto the God of Israel!

**Psalm 16:10 also speaks of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Corruption of a dead body begins on the fourth day; therefore it was very important that Jesus would rise again the third day. However, this verse does not specifically mention the number of days from death to resurrection as does Hosea 6:2. See also Isaiah 26:19 and Matthew 27:52,53*

An Everlasting Rest and an Eternal Rejoicing

Jill shivered as she stepped out barefoot onto the snow covered porch. She had looked out just in time to see the beautiful sunrise. There were still a few clouds left from the snow storm the night before, and the glowing sky was glorious with the rays of the early morning sun as it began to peek over the horizon.

Jill could feel the excitement running through her. She was about to come to the triumphant and joyful end of her “journey into the love of God.” What an experience it had been! How it had opened her eyes to the realization that the depth of the love of God was past finding out! She felt nearly overwhelmed by the fullness of it. She thanked God for the opportunity to do this study and for giving her a copy of His word to reveal the greatness of His love to her. She prayed that it would not just be a mental journey that gave her an emotional charge, but that God’s Word would make a deep and lasting change within her heart. And she prayed that God would do the same for all who would take this journey after her.

The final leg of the “journey into the love of God” began with one more look at Hosea 6:1-3, “*¹Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. ²After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. ³Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*”

Beautiful words! *“We shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD.”* Israel will live. She will not just exist as a nation. She will not be scattered abroad upon the earth among the other nations. She will live for ever in her own land, and she will follow the LORD.

Israel will know the LORD whose *“going forth is prepared as the morning.”* Truly, for Israel, joy will come in the morning. Jill could not help but think of the words of Psalm 19:1-6, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. ²Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. ³There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. ⁴Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. ⁶His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”*

The heavens declare the glory of God. According to Romans 1:20, even the eternal power and Godhead of the Lord is manifest in creation. The handiwork of God pictures what Jesus will do one day. Jesus’ message will go out through the whole earth. He will be called, *“the God of the whole earth.”* (Isaiah 54:5) *“His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto”* Israel *“as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”* (Hosea 6:3)

Jesus, the Son of righteousness, is going to come to Israel, and all His saints with Him. It will be as the morning - bright, hopeful, cheerful. He will go forth and make preparations for them; and He will bring in a great harvest.

The latter and the former rain are needed to produce a fruitful harvest. This is just what the Messiah will be to His people, Israel. He will come in and will subdue her enemies and will reign over the whole earth. Jesus will rule the earth with a rod of iron.

But unto Israel He will be the Saviour. The wealth of all the heathen will be gathered together for them in abundance. Complete provision will be made for all their needs. Not one thing will be lacking unto them. They will be free from oppression, fear, and terror.

The curse will be removed. There will be no more thorns, no more briers, but only fertile ground. Abundant will be the crops; beautiful will be the fir and the myrtle. And the trees of the field will rejoice together with the mountains and the hills, for God will heal them.

Israel will go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. God will restore unto her the corn and the wine and the oil and the gold and the silver which He had taken away. It will never be taken away from Israel again. As an everlasting sign of His love to Israel, God will heal the land and cause it to spring forth. The barren hills and the fields will be full of trees. The weeds and thorns will be no more. All will be perfect rest, and the joy will have no sorrow in it.

There will be no more night, and the gates of Israel will never close again. Violence will no more be heard in the land. The glory of the Gentiles will flow into it. The fir, the pine, and the box tree will beautify God's sanctuary. God will make Israel, "*an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.*" (Isaiah 60:15)

No more will the earthly sun light the land. There will be no more need of the sun or of the moon because the LORD will be unto them an everlasting light, and their God their glory. The days of their mourning will be ended, and they will inherit the land for ever. *

With joy shall God fulfill this promised rest.

"³For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. ⁴Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. ⁵For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." (Isaiah 54:3-5)

"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." (Isaiah 51:11)

Wow! That is the only word Jill could find to describe her thoughts. Truly, God's greatness is unsearchable.

Just to think of God's everlasting love to Israel. Just to think of God's tender care. And just to think of the part God's saints will have in it.

God's saints will not only reign with Jesus, but they will also be coming with Him when He comes to subdue Israel's enemies and to set up His kingdom of peace and prepare for His people their place of everlasting rest and eternal rejoicing. (See Zechariah 14:5) May God haste this day when Israel shall be restored unto her Husband for ever in the arms of unending love. Oh, what love!

*See Zechariah 14 and Isaiah 54, 55, & 60