

12. GOMER

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Hosea 2:23

“I will show my love to the one I called, ‘Not my loved-one’”

Choosing names for children isn't always easy. A name is for life and so it's quite an important decision. Now, imagine a father naming his children, 'PUNISHMENT', 'UNLOVED' and 'DISOWNED'?

Well, that's just what the prophet, Hosea, named his children. His wife was unfaithful and Hosea didn't know if his kids were really his kids?! So he was OK about giving them nasty names. He was angry! But the names were God's idea. In fact, the whole marriage had been God's idea.

'Go and find the most adulterous woman around and marry her', said God to Hosea.

Why, God?

And the answer came, 'Because I don't just want you to tell people how I feel, I want you to *feel*/how I feel!'

So Hosea hitched up with the most talked about girl in town, Gomer. He was good to her and loved her but she broke his heart. And Hosea understood how God feels about the people he loves.

Where does this end? Judgement? Punishment? Divorce?

Actually no. Despite the pain God said that he would keep loving his people. In fact, he was going to lavish his love on them. So, guess what? He tells Hosea to do the same to Gomer. Hosea can't just know that God is gracious; he needs to know how it feels for God to be gracious! And as Gomer receives Hosea's grace the names of her children are changed. 'Punishment' is named 'REBORN', 'Unloved' becomes 'BELOVED' and 'Disowned' becomes 'ACCEPTED'.

Did Gomer change her ways? We don't know. Maybe.

What about God's people? Can we change our ways?

It's not God's judgement but his kindness that changes us