

Adultery Allowed

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Adultery Forbidden (Ex. 20:14; Heb. 13:4).

Adultery Allowed (Num. 31:18; Hos. 1:2; 2:1-3).

In simple terms, adultery is being unfaithful to someone; especially in situations where an agreement has been made between two parties such as the covenant between God and His people, or the marriage agreement between a man and woman.

As no one can please God if they are unfaithful, when it comes to trusting and obeying Him, prohibition against adultery is included in the ten commandments (Heb. 11:6). Therefore, adultery is first and foremost a spiritual matter as the apostle Paul stated,

For we know that the law (of Almighty God) is spiritual... (Rom. 7:14a; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because all people and nations will eventually be grafted into the spiritual nation of Israel, after they learn to trust and obey God, adultery will no longer occur (Rom. 11:11-36; cf. Rev. 22:14-15),

You shall not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14; cf. Heb. 13:4).

Christ pointed out that committing adultery does not necessarily involve a sexual act (Mt. 5:28). This is why God compares adultery to an individual, or nation, that disobeys Him and is unrepentant,

Then I (God) saw that for all the causes for which **backsliding Israel** (ten of the tribes/families that descended from Jacob) **had committed adultery**, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah (the remaining tribes/families of Judah, Benjamin and Levi) did not fear, but went and played the harlot also (by following foreign gods; cf. Jer. 3:9) (Jer. 3:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Just as a husband or wife may desire to be with someone else, thus breaking their marriage vow, so the combined nations of Israel and Judah desired to follow the customs of foreign gods. By doing this, they broke the covenant they made with God at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:5-8), and He regarded this as a marriage agreement,

...My covenant which they (nations of Israel and Judah) broke, though **I was a husband to them, says the Lord** (Jer. 31:33b).

As some people claim Numbers 31:18 is proof that God condones adultery, this scripture will be now be examined,

But keep alive for yourselves all the young girls who have not known a man intimately (Num. 31:18).

Both the scripture above, as well as instructions in Deuteronomy 21:10-13, deal with marriages that are permitted following warfare. In neither case is adultery involved. Instead, single women who were not married were allowed to marry Israelite men.

The next section of scripture, used to accuse God of condoning adultery, is rich in figurative language. As mentioned previously, an individual or an entire nation can commit adultery without sex being involved. Because the ten tribes of Israel became entrenched in pagan systems of worship, Almighty God regarded them as being the same as a harlot. A harlot is not faithful to a husband in the same sense that Israel was not faithful to their spiritual "husband" (Ex. 19:4-8). Therefore, when God told Hosea to take a wife of harlotry, He was not speaking in a literal sense. Instead, God was showing that He regarded any wife from the ten tribes of Israel as being the same as a harlot,

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 harlotry** (spiritual adultery) **by departing from the Lord**' (Hos. 1:2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The conduct of the leaders and citizens of ancient Israel was so sinful that God was going to allow them to go into captivity, if they did not repent, and Hosea was sent to warn the inhabitants of Samaria about this situation. Therefore, the marriage of a prophet of God to a woman living in Samaria, and the names that God gave to the children of that marriage, were meant as a form of shock treatment in the hope they would pay attention to the serious state they were in and the consequences that would soon befall them,

So he (Hosea) went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴Then the Lord said to him: 'Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while **I (God) will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel** (Hos. 1:3-4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him (Hosea): 'Call her name Lo-Ruhamah (No mercy), for **I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away** (Hos. 1:6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹Then God said: 'Call his name Lo-Ammi (Not My People), for **you are not My people, and I will not be your God** (Hos. 1:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Bring charges against your mother (Gomer the daughter of Diblaim – **figuratively representing the spiritual harlotry of Israel**), bring charges (contend); for she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! **Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts** (i.e. God's call for the people to repent before it is too late); ³Lest I strip her naked and expose her, as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst (Hos. 2:2-3; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The entire 16th chapter of Ezekiel deals with Israel's "sister", Judah, and the figurative language is similar to that used in Hosea. Judah is compared to a harlot as well because she was unfaithful to her husband just as Israel had been (Eze. 16:22).

The false religious system that permeates this present evil age (Gal. 1:4) is compared to the Babylonian mystery religion, which God describes as 'the mother of harlots',

The woman (symbol of a religious system) was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. ⁵And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH, ⁶And I (John) saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus...(Rev. 17:4-6a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So God's use of the term 'harlot' does not always apply literally. In many cases, it is meant spiritually because it is associated with false systems of worship. It is highly unlikely that Hosea married a literal harlot as some claim because this would have meant breaking the seventh commandment (Ex. 20:14; cf. Lev. 20:10; Mt. 5:32; 19:9). Instead, the woman Hosea took to be his wife was from one of the ten tribes of Israel located in or around the city of Samaria, which was immersed in the worship of various false deities. Therefore, she was synonymous with a system that God described as being guilty of harlotry. Among other things, worshipping these pagan gods included the sacrifice of children, which God described as one of their acts of harlotry,

Moreover you (Judah) took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them (various pagan deities) to be devoured. **Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, ²¹that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire?** (Eze. 16:20-21; cf. 20:26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As mentioned in previous studies, God allows mankind the freedom to choose whether to obey Him or not. Whenever individuals or nations reject His law and commandments, they are committing adultery and harlotry, spiritually speaking. In the future, all peoples and nations will be ashamed of their past conduct when the truth about their spiritual adultery becomes apparent,

O Lord, the hope of Israel, **all who forsake You shall be ashamed.** 'Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters' (Jer. 17:13; cf. Rev. 7:17; emphasis added).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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