

ホセア書 1 章 2 節の「姦淫の女」と「姦淫の子どもら」

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ABSTRACT D.T. TSUMURA, “‘A Woman of Adultery and Children of Adultery’ in Hosea 1:2”. Hosea 1:2b has been interpreted variously. Some hold that Hosea was commanded by God to marry a promiscuous woman and have children by her. However, the Hebrew phrase אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים (*’ēšet zənūnīm*) can hardly mean “an adulterous woman,” for the masculine plural noun which modifies the feminine singular noun in construct form should be translated literally as “the woman of adultery,” that is, “the woman who will end up committing adultery,” like “the spirit of adultery” (*rū^h zənūnīm*) 4:12 and 5:4, namely “the spirit which leads to adultery.” For one thing, the same masculine plural noun modifies also “the children” as in *yaldē zənūnīm* in 1:2. One can hardly expect it to mean “children who commit adultery.” The phrase most likely means ① “the children of (her) adultery” or ② “the children of an adulterous generation (see Matt. 12:39, 16:4; Mk 8:38).”

Moreover, it is crucial to distinguish between the phrase “the children of adultery” *yaldē zənūnīm* (1:2) and “the sons of adultery” *bənē zənūnīm* (2:4). Hosea had two sons and a daughter of his own through Gomer in 1:3-9, but after she left him she had other sons (2:4), so God’s command in 1:2 to Hosea to take “the children of *zənūnīm*” is not concerned only with his own sons and daughter, but also with the *illegitimate* children that she bore after she left him.

It should be noted that in 1:2 the imperative verb “take!” is expressed only once. While the verb is possibly ellipsis for “take the children,” it is rather forced to translate the verb as “to take a woman,” that is “to marry,” and “to take the children” as meaning “to have children.” A good

translation would be “Go, accept the wife of adultery and the children of adultery.”

The flow of discourse runs from the end of the first prose section [A] (1:1-9) to the second prose section [B] (3:1-5), which is interrupted by the insertion of the poetic section [X] (1:10-2:23), thus constituting the AXB pattern. With this understanding of the whole literary and rhetorical structure of chs. 1-3, i) one can interpret the woman in [B] is in fact Gomer, who left her husband Hosea after she bore three children, i.e. Izreel, Lo-ruhama, and Lo-ammi, and went after other men and had “sons” (2:4) by them. ii) But God commanded Hosea in 3:1 to get her back, that is, to redeem her, and by implication, also redeem the “sons” she bore through adultery and take care of ② “the children of an adulterous generation”. This “children” includes both Hosea’s three children and Gomer’s illegitimate children.

The prophet Hosea is commanded to accept his adulterous wife and all of her children, because his conduct is deeply related to his message. God wants to bring his covenant people Israel back to himself because of his unfailing mercy.