

It is the **Good News...** of the *Gospel!*

“Shout from the housetops! Shout from the city square! Shout throughout the land the **GOOD NEWS! THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL HAS BEEN REDEEMED!**” trumpeted out sending birds a-flight.

They looked at one another.

“What was said?” she asked.

“We’re redeemed?” he replied.

“You’re sure?” She gave him an evil eye.

Again, the trumpets blasted. Dogs began howling in harmony.

“Hear ye, hear ye! They were lost, but now they are found!”

They turned to each other, frowning and shaking their heads.

“A wretch like me?” she whispered.

“A fool like me?” he asked.

They stood up tall and motionless, looking side to side, but the excitement faded quickly into a thick silence.

“Tell us more,” he shouted.

Not a sound could be heard but his fading echo. The untimely still of night covered them like a cold, heavy blanket.

“Tell us more.” His voice faded into a raspy dry cough.



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A clash of thunder split the sky and they fell to their knees. Trumpets sounded through the heavy veil. The pounding of their hearts and heavy breaths played their part in this strange orchestra carrying a message to people far away.

“Once cast away, they became Gentiles—but our Beloved died and he has risen! He is calling us back to God our Father! From Jerusalem, he calls to us from across the sea. We have been redeemed!”

They collapsed to the ground. Their bodies molded into the curves of the terrain, they lay staring into the wonder of the blue—faint, their breathing softer than whispers.

“After all these years wandering through the nations,” she whispered (Hosea 9:17).

“We have suffered without our God. My back aches.” Like a set of heavy weights, he lifted his hands, “Look, so aged and I’m tired. Why, O why did we so long ago walk away from Him?”

Tears pushed against the base of his weary eyes until the banks burst. “My Lord,” he whimpered. “You want **me** back?”

He began mumbling into a murmur, “I don’t remember our mother tongue. When He talks to us again, I won’t know what He is saying.” He dropped his head to the side watching her lay motionless, staring up. He nudged her. “‘Hallelujah’ is all I remember now.” His voice broke into an uncontrolled cry.

“Shhh.” She held his hand. “He will speak to us in our new language,” she assured him (Isaiah 28:11).

He brought her hand to his lips and gently caressed her fingers pushing deeper and deeper until he broke into a kiss. Suddenly he sat up. “Will He find us?”

She turned on her side and brushed her hand over the worried lines covering his forehead. “Of course! He will. Though He sifted us through the nations, He said that not one of us will fall to the earth (Amos 9:9). We have never been hidden from Him,” she then began to weep silently. “His eyes have always been on us **and our ways**; we are not hidden from His face and **our iniquity was never concealed from Him** (Jeremiah 16:17). Can this redemption be possible?” She leaned against her elbow and peered over him frowning motionless like mannequin.

“Are you okay.” He shook her until she looked his way.



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“We profaned His name wherever we went! He won’t forgive us! **Oh, My God!** And we have blamed His Son for every earthly difficulty. **Jesus Christ!** We shouted. I can still hear our profanity!” (Ezekiel 36:22)

“Shhh—yes, some of us continue to be angry and rebel. I know that of all the nations on earth, we are the only ones who profane the name of our God. All other nations reverence their holy teachers. Even now, I speak respectfully when I use the name of Confucius, Buddha, Allah, or Mohammed. Our story is the mirroring of humanity: self-reliance, self-direction and self-glory. Remember how we were jealous of our brother, the Jews who were given the sceptre (Isaiah 11:13). They burdened us so! Taxes, more taxes the king demanded and we were told to obey. Enough! I dare say, it was enough. And now, time—is healing our jealousy, and the scepter holders are no longer hostile towards us (Isaiah 11:13).”

“That wasn’t God’s way to oppress us so, anyway,” she whispered. “Why did they not give us **grace** from those taxes? We begged for grace; they used their many by-laws to oppress us—burden us for their benefit.” She took a deep breath and sighed into a smile. “Thank goodness that was a long time ago. Nearly all forgotten—thankfully the anger has subsided.”

He stood up and looked around breathing in, filling his lungs. Lifting his eyes, he raised his head and opened his arms. “Look, what we have been given. The blessings of our pleasant pastures, green and rich with resources—the birthright blessing. Just look!”

She watched and admired him acknowledging the birthright blessing—their undeserved gift of wealth and riches of a king.

He rested against the rock by his side and slowly went down to one knee, pressing on the ground, he bent the other and prayed, “You kept your oath to our forefathers. Your generosity is beyond measure. We do not yet fully appreciate the magnitude of your gift of grace. We are still so much like the nations. They strive for status, world control and power, and self-glory. And so, what was prophesied is true Genesis 48:19, Ephraim will become a *melo ha' goyim*—the fullness of the nations and fully like them.”



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He stopped abruptly. “Did you hear that?”

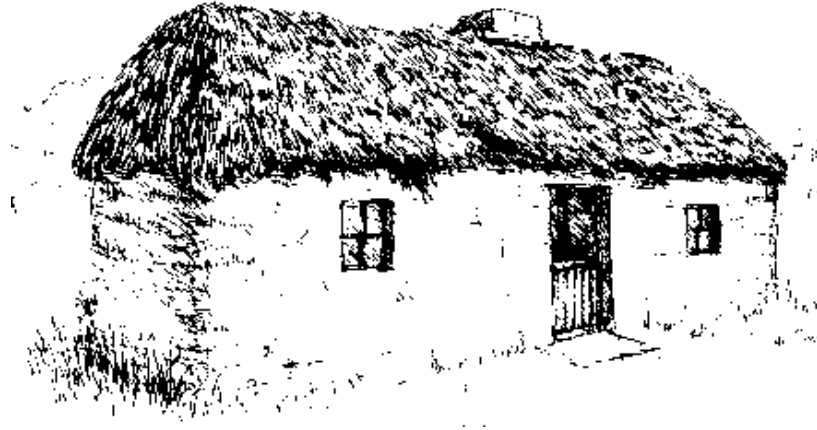
She nodded. “Yes—but, so?”

“Another Hebrew word! ‘Melo ha’ goyim’ means ‘fullness of the nations’. It is making sense to me now. Ephraim—that is us—was prophesied to become the fullness of those who are **NOT** of God’s **ONE** nation, Israel. **We** filled the **many nations**—the Gentiles when we were scattered among them, and since we refused to repent after we were released from captivity, our penalty became seven times longer, living among the Gentiles. Though in time, God gave us our own land, still look at us! We **behave** like them and follow **their** traditions. **Truly, we have become just like them.** Oh! Shame on us.”

She reached over and took his hand. “Once we were called Lo-Ammi [Not my people] (Hosea 1:8) now through the death of Jesus, God calls us ‘His people’ and still, it hurts!” She began to sob.

He pulled her into a tight embrace. “We **all**, I know still feel the pain of the divorce. But—our story has now changed. What was written by the prophets happened! We have been redeemed!”

“—Written—come,” she said. The lights in her eyes returned. “I have a copy of the Holy Books.”



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Together, they ran into the cabin and she rummaged through her glory box by her bed. A safe keeping place for her mother’s wedding dress, her first painting, her father’s hat and her husband’s lost diary. “Look! Here it is!”

“Both books?”

She placed the thicker book carefully in his open hands. “Of course!”

He sat staring at the hand-sewn leather cover. A musty odour triggered a gagging response which sparked a series of coughs. He hovered his hand over the engraved title and closed his eyes. Gently, his fingertips landed and one by one he moved his hand over the letters. Like locked in a cycle, he kept moving his fingers over the embossed letters.

She watched him struggle. Gently, she opened the book.

He leaned back into the chair. “Thank you.”

“Remember, we have been redeemed! It’s hard—I feel it too.” She reached into her glory box and picked up a loosely bound collection of writing. It was wrapped in granny’s silk scarf. “Here, don’t read from the Old Testament. Tell me about grace.”

“Okay.” His sigh of relief brought a big smile and a tender embrace. The collection fell open to a letter to the Romans and he began to read, “I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying...” He stopped as she nestled in against him. “We’re saved, O my God, we’re saved,” he whispered pressing her against him.

“Even us, **whom he also called**, not only from the **Jews** but **also** from the **Gentiles**? As he said in Hosea. I will call them ‘My people’ who are ‘Not my people’; and I will call her ‘My loved one’ who is ‘Not my loved one’—”

“Stop!” She thrust the palm of her hand against his ribs. “I don’t want to hear about the divorce again!”

“Hey! I’m just reading here. It sounds like grace.”

He turned back the pages glancing back at her.

“A time will come when our children will not remember this pain—image that!” He stopped to massage his forehead. “But, we can’t run away. Listen, I am ashamed of our past. How can we accept so great a gift and not change? We must—there’s no more room for rebellion.”

He took her hand. “It will happen that **in the very place** where it was said to them, ‘**You are not my people,**’ they will be called ‘**sons of the living God**’ (Romans 9:26).

“He still loves us?” She walked to the window and wiped the pane. “Here I am,” she cried.



<http://www.medievalists.net/2014/02/09/the-original-medieval-lovers-books-on-abelard-and-heloise/>

“Yes, and—I remember it written in the old book that He would lead us into the desert and speak tenderly to us... There we will sing as in the days of our youth, as in the day we came up out of Egypt. **In that day, we will call Christ ‘my husband’**; we will no longer call Him ‘my master’.”

He smiled across to her with a bright twinkle in his eyes. “See! The scripture prophesied our redemption! **This is such good news.**”

She turned to him; her eyes bright with the innocence of a child. “I remember something my Mamma always said that **Joseph will be saved** and **Judah strengthened**. Judah—never divorced, will be strengthened (Zechariah 10:6). What else? What else does it say?”

“See, we can’t get away from the Old Testament.” He positioned the book again on his lap as she pressed into him. “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (I Peter 2:10).

“Received mercy—see that—grace! We have been called ‘Not my people’ for hundreds of years. Even our brothers of the sceptre treated us badly. I remember when they would not let me take water from the well in the cool of the morning. They made me take when they were finished in the heat of the day.”

“Shhh—forgive the actions of our brothers from the past. I know a time will come when our brothers will no longer vex us and we will no longer be jealous of them (Isaiah 13:11). All that matters, is that **He still loves us all.**

She stood up and raised her hands to the heavens quoting Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.”

“Hallelujah, my love. We who understand this mystery are most grateful—**we owe Him everything, even our very life.** The greatest act of love is to lay down your life for your friends (John 15:13), and our Savior did this for us, we—a **divorced** people, a rebellious people. Our Savior paid the price of our sins. His death ended the old marriage covenant that **We** broke. God no longer sees us as adulterers—people enslaved to false worship. **That is such good news.**”



The compilation slipped from his lap, when he jumped up and grabbed her hands pulling her into his arms.

“Do you see that?” he shouted. “Do you see that?”

“I do! I do!” she whispered.

“**It is such good news!** And he is resurrected! He is alive! We can re-enter into a covenant with our God.” He began to ramble. “I can see what Paul meant now when he said that **ALL of Israel will be saved** (Romans 11:26). We thought since the divorce that we would never again come into the family of God having been at one time ‘called out’ and ‘set apart’. We were so—without hope.”

He flashed his index finger in the air and announced, “That is why it was recorded in Ezekiel 37:11 ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone, we are cut off.’ But redemption has come to the divorced. We are a virgin in God’s eyes. No longer worshipers of a false religion. **That is such good news.**”

“It all makes sense,” he added. “So much meaning once hidden now revealed in the **good news.**” He grabbed her at the shoulders. “We must not forget the mystery of his sacrifice for **us.**” And released her quickly to scratch a phantom itch on the top of his head.

His expended the overflow of energy by pacing the floor and spilling every thought out into and an analysis. “We were once called, but we refused to obey. So, into captivity He sent us, but when released, we continued to refuse to obey so our penalty became seven times longer, wandering among the nations. Everyone else is settled in the countries God gave them for nearly 4,000 years. We are the only ones who have just arrived and to boot, at the end of the age. While He died for the rest of the world, they have not refused Him like we have.”

He stopped with an iron clad stare, “Let us **not** refuse Him again.”

She pipped, “I’m going back to Him. **I willingly want to serve Him.** He will believe me because **I will keep His commandments.** I know—there are some among us who say they are done and gone, but they are liars and the truth is not in them” (1 John 2:3-6). She stood up poised like a warrior. Her eyes bearing down on him. “I’m going back!”

“Me too! I am worthy of nothing. I am less than any born a Gentile. And while our two houses made such a big deal over the law, we both failed to **obey it properly** and give **grace** one to another.”

He paused. She watched him synthetizing the mystery again.

“And—” he shouted. “There is more—our brothers added to the law with their by-laws, side-laws, and other-laws and we took away from the law. He doesn’t want us to add or subtract to His law (Proverbs 30:6).”

“Huh!” he chuckled. “It has taken us **ALL** this time for us to figure this out. I guess we were too busy fighting wars for ‘the cause’ which no one could explain. I guess—King Richard had a reason to fight in the crusades to free Jerusalem from the Muslims; he may have remembered his roots. The Great King Alfred fought a significant battle against the pagan Vikings to Christianize England; he may have remembered his roots. But none of us want to remember that painful divorce and we’re doing everything to keep it buried.”

Speechless they stood in a loving embrace.

She reached up and kissed his cheek. “If we had only studied the words of the prophets those many years ago. We should have repented. But—here we are—in distant lands remembering Him (Zechariah 10:6-12).

She brushed his wild hair from his eyes and hummed a tune that began as a whisper and filled the whole room sounding out throughout the countryside like an orchestra.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

... hummm...

Such is the **good news of the gospel** that God was willing to give His only begotten Son—His only heir in heaven, to die on the cross for a **divorced** people—a faithless people and an unfaithful people who added heavy burdens and traditions to His law. Now, the final offer stands. **Christ paid the penalty of our sins. God’s Holy Spirit is available to those who repent. Eternal life is again an option. That is very good news!**

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich



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