

## The Lord Directs Hosea to Take Gomer Back as His Wife

### Hosea 3

Hosea 3 - *“Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.”*

*<sup>2</sup> So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. <sup>3</sup> And I said to her, “You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you.”*

*<sup>4</sup> For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. <sup>5</sup> Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.”*

#### Background Notes

The theme of the book of Hosea is “God’s redeeming love.” This theme is seen in Hosea’s prophecies, and also in Hosea’s life. The Lord Himself directed Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, but she left Hosea, committed adultery, and became a prostitute.

The fact that Hosea was able to buy her back for “15 shekels of silver and 1½ homers of barley” (v2) indicates how low Gomer had sunk morally. 15 shekels of silver was the price of a female slave (only half the price of a male slave), and barley wasn’t worth much. It appears that Gomer had sunk to the level of a slave, who was required to earn money for her owner by prostitution.

The Bible doesn’t reveal when Gomer left Hosea or how long her adulterous condition continued, but in chapter 3 the Lord directed Hosea to go and bring his wife home. Hosea actually had to **redeem** his wife. He had to buy her back from her condition as a prostitute slave. Thus the theme of Hosea is “redeeming love.”

*“Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover, and is committing adultery” (v1).* Translations vary here. Some say “lover,” some say “husband,” and some say “another.” Who is meant here? Hosea - or the adulterous lover? Is the point that another man loved Gomer and had formed an adulterous relationship with her? Or is the point that Hosea still loved Gomer as his wife, even though she had left him and was involved in adultery? I tend to go with *“a woman who is loved by her husband, and is committing adultery”* – that Hosea was the “lover/husband” – because this better illustrates God’s continuing love for Israel, in spite of her spiritual adultery.

Verse 1 leaves no doubt that Hosea's relationship with Gomer was definitely an illustration of God's relationship with Israel: *"Then the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans."* As Gomer had turned her back on Hosea's love and committed adultery, so Israel had turned away from God's love and committed "spiritual adultery" by worshiping pagan foreign gods. The raisin cakes (v1) were offerings made to the idols of the false pagan gods.

As Hosea continued to love Gomer and brought her back with redeeming love, so God has never stopped loving Israel, and He plans to bring her back into a love relationship in the future.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The future status of Israel is predicted in Hosea 3:4.

*"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim" (v4).*

This verse describes the present status of Israel -- no king, no priesthood - and no idolatry.

Verse 1 stated that the relationship between Hosea and Gomer is an illustration of the relationship between God and Israel. Now look at verse 3: *"And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you."* When Hosea brought Gomer back to their home, it seems that a period of time elapsed before the full love relationship was established once again - a disciplinary waiting period. Gomer was no longer committing adultery, but the intimate relationship between Hosea and Gomer was not yet re-established.

*"The children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim."* What a picture of the present status of Israel! There has been no idolatry in Israel since the Babylonian captivity. There has been no sacrifice or priesthood in Israel since the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70AD. There has been no king in Israel since Jesus Christ was rejected as King.

But God has been dealing with Israel in disciplinary love all through the years. All the hard times that the Jewish people have experienced through the centuries were part of this process. This doctrinal point is quite clear and can't be denied. The present status of Israel is predicted in Hosea 3:4.

### 2. The future salvation of Israel is predicted in Hosea 3:5.

*"Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (v5).*

Israel is back in the land and is a nation once again. However, this is not the fulfillment of Hosea 3:5. What we see today is only the beginning of what will take place in the future.

Notice the beginning of verse 5: *“Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.”* Although some Jewish people today have trusted Jesus for salvation, the nation has not yet turned back to the God of Abraham. But they will in the future - *“in the latter days,”* as the end of verse 5 says.

And at that time the nation will not only turn back to the love of the one true God of their fathers, but they will turn to their Messiah - the Messiah they once rejected, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Verse 5 says that they will seek *“David their king.”* This is a reference to Jesus Christ, who is literally of the dynasty of David. The promised throne of David will be re-established here on this earth and Christ will reign as King!

Other Scriptures predict this great return of Israel to the Lord. In fact, the literal return of Israel is predicted in two Scriptures from Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 4:30-31: *“When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice (for the Lord your God is a merciful God). He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.”*

And Deuteronomy 30:1-3: *“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.”*

What a great time it will be, when the Lord brings Israel back from captivity and from all the nations where the Jewish people have been scattered! As we read in Romans 11:15, *“For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”* What a great future salvation for Israel!

Let me ask you: what about *your* salvation? The future salvation of Israel is predicted in Hosea 3:5, but what about your own personal salvation, right now? Have you turned to the Lord? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ, and Him alone, for your eternal salvation? 2 Corinthians 6:2 says that *“Now is the accepted time; behold now is the time of salvation.”* Let the future salvation of Israel predicted here in Hosea 3:5 motivate you to make sure of your personal salvation - now.

## **Practical Application**

### **Don't "spiritualize away" to the Church Scriptures about Israel.**

Some Christians teach that the nation of Israel is the "Church of the Old Testament." **No.** The Church began at Pentecost, after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In addition, the Church in the New Testament is not a "New Israel." **No!**

It's very important to *keep a clear distinction between the Church and Israel*, or you will run into serious problems in biblical interpretation.

The promises and prophecies about the return of Israel and the blessings to come upon Israel will be fulfilled in spite of Israel's failure. Don't spiritualize away to the Church the promises and prophecies God made with Israel! *These prophetic promises were made with **Israel**, and these promises will be fulfilled with **Israel!*** Many of the promised blessings of Israel can be applied to the Church, and some are extended to the Church - but ***don't take them away from Israel!***

The present status and salvation of Israel are seen and predicted in Hosea 3. God said that Hosea's relationship with Gomer was an illustration of His relationship with **Israel** (not the Church). In fact, you could outline Hosea 3 as follows: Israel's past (v1-2), Israel's present (v3-4), and Israel's future (v5).

Notice how difficult it is to spiritualize these verses – yet some Christians take these prophecies and promises dealing with Israel, and say that what God has done with Israel should be interpreted in a spiritualized way for the Church, rather than literally to Israel. How? I challenge anyone to "spiritualize" verses 3, 4, and 5 to the Church! The promises of Hosea 3 should not be "spiritualized" and transferred from Israel to the Church.

What is the Scripture talking about here? It's talking about **Israel!** Let's "*rightly divide the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 3:15). Don't spiritualize away to the Church the Scriptures that are clearly written about Israel.