

Hosea

Chapter 3

Hosea's Reconciliation With His Wife

The LORD said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.³ Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.”⁴ For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol.⁵ Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.

3:1 *said to me.* Ch. 3 is narrated in the first person, ch. 1 in the third person. (CSB)

God directs Hosea to love Gomer despite her unfaithfulness. This act dramatically depicts God's faithfulness to an adulterous Israel. (TLSB)

Go ... love ... your wife. Hosea's love for unfaithful Gomer illustrated God's love for unfaithful Israel. God's love for Israel (see 11:1; 14:4) is the basic theme of the book. (CSB)

IS AN ADULTRESS – One still regarded and surrounded with conjugal love by her lawful husband, though estranged from him on account of her adulterous acts. (Kretzmann)

other gods. See Ex 20:3; Dt 31:20. (CSB)

Just as Jehovah loves the children of Israel, although they turn to other gods, so the prophet should love this woman, who would become guilty of adultery. (Kretzmann)

raisin cakes. Offered to Baal in thanksgiving for harvest. (CSB)

Devotion and offerings to Baal. This recalls Israel's boast that the fruit of the land comes through Baal (2:5). (TLSB)

3:2 Gomer had evidently become a slave, and Hosea bought her back. (CSB)

Beyond the emotional burden of his marriage to an adulteress, Hosea also had to pay a price for her: 15 shekels of silver and c 9 bushels of barley. This may be compared to the fine imposed for injuring a female slave (30 silver shekels; Ex 21:32) or the offering given by a woman fulfilling her vow (30 silver shekels; Lv 27:4). (TLSB)

fifteen shekels. Half the usual price of a slave (Ex 21:7, 32) or of the redemption value of a woman's vow (Lev 27:4). (CSB)

lethek. See NIV text note. Comparison with prices in 2Ki 7:1, 16, 18 suggests that half was paid in money (silver) and half in produce (barley)—for a total value of 30 shekels. (CSB)

A total of some twelve bushels of grain. This was dowry-money, but the amount was that paid for a slave, cp. Ex. 21, 32; Zech. 11, 12. The transaction undoubtedly pointed to the fact that the Lord had chosen Israel as His people while they were still in bondage in the land of Egypt, and the fact that half of the amount was paid in common grain indicated the lowly condition of the bride at this time. (Kretzmann)

3:3–5 A picture of exile and return. (CSB)

3:3 *many days.* Not forever. There would be an “afterward” (v. 5), a future. (CSB)

Though Israel will never cease to belong to the Lord, the fullness of their relationship will obviously not be enjoyed until after the return from the impending Assyrian exile. (TLSB)

live with. Suggests a period of isolation, comparable to Israel's exile. (CSB)

Not taking any other consort, loyal in wedded love. The reference is undoubtedly to the time of the exile, when Israel was estranged from the public worship of Jehovah and yet was to remain faithful to Him until the time of the restoration. (Kretzmann)

belong ... be to you. Gomer is expected to be exclusively devoted to Hosea, just as he will be to her. This relationship symbolizes the one between the Lord and Israel. (TLSB)

3:4 Such privations will remind the exiles of their broken relationship with God. (TLSB)

king. See 1:4; 5:1; 8:4, 10; 10:15; 13:10–11. (CSB)

prince. See 5:10; 7:3, 5; 8:4; 13:10. (CSB)

Being without a king or prince means being without a government of their own. (Kretzmann)

without sacrifice. See 6:6; 8:11, 13. (CSB)

Namely, those of public worship in the Temple. (Kretzmann)

sacred stones. See 10:1–2; Dt 16:22; 1Ki 14:23; 2Ki 17:10; Mic 5:13. (CSB)

Pillars as used in connection with their worship. (Kretzmann)

ephod. Here an image associated with idols (see Jdg 8:27; 17:5). (CSB)

A priestly mantle or cape, either costly and elaborate or relatively simple. Cf 1Sm 2:18; 23:6–11, where it is used when seeking a sign of the future. (TLSB)

Beautiful vest of the high priest which was used in determining the will of God and uncovering the future, Ex. 28, 6-12. (Kretzmann)

idol. See Ge 31:30; 1Sa 19:13, 16. (CSB)

household gods. Hbr *teraphim*, small, human-shaped idols. Micah used some in conjunction with an ephod in order to ordain his son as priest (Jgs 17:5); they were also used to divine the future (Ezk 21:21). (TLSB)

These were small, human-shaped household gods which had been retained from the earliest days of Israel's history. The exile brought to an end not only the public worship of Jehovah, but also the remnants of idol-worship as practiced as a matter of tradition. During the captivity the children of God realized the vanity of all idol-worship and were ready to accept the true God. (Kretzmann)

3:5 return. A basic word in Hosea's vocabulary (see 2:7; 5:4; 6:1; 7:10; 11:5; 12:6; 14:1–2). (CSB)

The Jewish Church after the exile being the organization in which the belief in the true God was still taught. (Kretzmann)

seek. Israel's repentance is envisioned (cf. 5:15)—the reverse of her present stubborn rebellion (7:10). (CSB)

LORD their God. See 12:9; 13:4; Jer 50:4. (CSB)

David their king. The Messianic king from the dynasty of David (see Jer 30:9; Eze 34:24). After the death of Solomon, Israel (the northern kingdom) had abandoned the Davidic kings. (CSB)

Though Israel had not been under David's line since Solomon's death, the promised messianic descendant of David (Jesus Christ) would someday become the King for all people. (TLSB)

fear. Hbr *pachad*, "to dread or be in awe" (e.g., Ps 27:1; 119:161; Is 19:16–17). (TLSB)

his blessings. The vineyards and olive groves that had been taken away (see 2:12–13, 21) and all of God's gifts (see Jer 31:12–14). (CSB)

last days. The Hebrew for this phrase occurs 13 times in the OT, sometimes simply meaning the future (“days to come,” Ge 49:1), but most of the time, as no doubt here, referring to the Messianic age (“afterward,” Joel 2:28; cf. Ac 2:17; Heb 1:2). (CSB)

Conventional prophetic term for the messianic age, when both God’s people and the Gentiles would be gathered to Him (cf Dt 4:30; Ezk 34:11–24). (TLSB)

Ch 3 In obedience to the Lord’s request, Hosea redeems Gomer and renews his commitment to her, despite her unfaithfulness. This prophesies God’s desire to restore Israel as a pure people after the exile. We are sometimes challenged to swallow our pride and forgive others in similar difficult ways. At such times, we are strengthened by the knowledge that God gave His own Son to forgive and restore us. • We give thanks to You, O Lord, that Your patience toward us covers all our sins and restores us perfectly to the image of Your Son. Amen. (TLSB)