

## ISRAEL'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

### **TEXT: HOSEA 3:1-5**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Hosea 3 is brief -- only five verses. This brief chapter presents a panorama of Israel's future from the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 BC up until the second coming of Christ.
2. Hosea purchased his adulteress wife for fifteen pieces of silver and about ten bushels of barley, stipulating that she should wait for a long period of time before she should be restored to her conjugal rights (3:2, 3).
3. This symbolizes that Israel is to live for a long period of time without her ancient rites of religion, and yet will be free from the idolatry that led to her downfall (3:4).
4. Then after "many days" (3:3, 4), Israel will at last acknowledge Jesus as her Messiah, and will once again enjoy the blessings of God.
5. Verse 5 is a beautiful description of the restoration of Israel "in the latter days."

#### **I. ISRAEL'S SHAMEFUL PAST (3:1, 2)**

#### **II. ISRAEL'S PRESENT DISPERSION (3:3, 4)**

#### **III. ISRAEL'S GLORIOUS FUTURE (3:5)**

#### **I. ISRAEL'S SHAMEFUL PAST (3:1, 2)**

1. Gomer, Hosea's adulteress wife, represents the idolatrous nation of Israel, "who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine" (3:1).
2. Jeremiah 3:20 puts it this way, "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD."
3. The "flagons of wine" represent Israel's false and blasphemous worship. It was a rejection of God's divinely ordered worship. *Strong's Concordance* says this refers to "raisin-cakes, used in sacrificial feasts," and that is how most translations have rendered it.
4. In Hosea 3:1, the LORD does not even refer to Gomer as Hosea's wife, but as "a woman." This is meant to express the separation in which Hosea had lived from Gomer for her unfaithfulness. She had dishonored the family name, broken her husband's heart, and betrayed her children. She was a "treacherous wife" (cf. Jer. 3:20).
5. The LORD said to Hosea, "Go yet (again), love a woman beloved of her friend (i.e., another man)" (3:1).

6. The LORD did not say, "Go and take a woman," but rather "love a woman," though she was certainly undeserving of his love.
7. The Hebrew word translated "friend" (3:1) can mean simply a friend or a neighbor, but here it refers to Gomer's paramour, her illicit lover.
8. The NKJV says, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery..."
9. Gomer was "an adulteress," but Hosea still loved her, just like the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turned to other gods (3:1).
10. This was all "according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel" (3:1). The love of God for Israel is an unconditional love.
11. Jeremiah 31:3 says the LORD loves Israel "with an everlasting love."
12. When we come to the New Testament we see God's love for His church.
13. "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).
14. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5).
15. God is not finished with Israel (cf. Hosea 3:5). The Bible teaches the restoration of Israel. The Bible does not teach so-called "replacement theology."
16. Replacement theology "is the view that the church is the new or true Israel that has permanently replaced or superseded Israel as the people of God" (see Thomas Ice, *What is Replacement Theology?*)
17. God still loves Israel, and God has a plan for Israel. And not only does God love Israel and not only does God love the church, God loves the whole world (John 3:16).
18. George L. Robinson, who wrote a commentary on the book of Hosea, said, "In all the world's literature, there is no record of human love like that of Hosea."
19. Hosea was to love his unfaithful wife "according to the love of the LORD" (3:1). S. Franklin Logsdon said, "This is the only effective way to love the unlovely. This is how a missionary loves the odious leper, the superstitious native, the savage, uncivilized people of the jungle. This is how rescue mission attendants love the alcohol-saturated, vermin-infected wrecks of humanity which are gathered from the skid rows of the world" (*Hosea, People Who Forgot God*).
20. Many years ago, when C.I. Scofield was pastoring in Dallas, Texas, a young lady from his church was getting ready to leave to serve in China as a missionary. Before she left she dropped by his study to say

- goodbye, and Dr. Scofield said to her, "Well, sister I am so glad you love these Chinese well enough to give your life to them."
21. She quickly replied, "Oh, Dr. Scofield, you are mistaken. I do not love the Chinese. I have absolutely no love for them. Actually, I rather dislike them."
  22. He then asked her, "Why then are you going?"
  23. She answered, "Why am I going? Because I love my Lord and He has told me to go."
  24. After seven years she came back, on her first furlough, and she came into the same study, and said to him, "Dr. Scofield, do you remember what I said to you in this room when I was going to China?"
  25. "Yes," he said, "I very well remember."
  26. She said, "I told you I did not love the Chinese at all. Dr. Scofield, I was telling you the truth, but I love them now. I went because I loved my Lord, but now I love them, and I did not even want to come home on furlough."
  27. This is what God told Hosea to do, and Hosea obeyed (1:2; 3:1).  
Love is a command, not an emotion. God commands husbands,  
"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).
  28. This is one of the reasons why I do not approve of divorce. Men say they do not love their wives anymore, and wives say they no longer love their husbands, but love is a command (3:1).
  29. If anyone had a good cause to divorce his wife it would be Hosea, but he did not divorce Gomer.
  30. Over 100 years ago, A.T. Pierson said that if the law would not permit divorced persons to marry again, "does anyone believe there would be one divorce asked where now there are one hundred?"
  31. Just as Hosea had been commissioned to share with God the pain of betrayal by an unfaithful wife, he is now commissioned to participate with God in the experience of redeeming that faithless wife.
  32. The price of redemption was fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer and a half of barley, i.e., about ten bushels (3:2).
  33. Proverbs 31:10 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."
  34. A virtuous woman is worth far above rubies, but Hosea's adulteress wife was only worth fifteen pieces of silver (half the price for a slave according to Exodus 21:32) and about ten bushels of barley.
  35. Barley was the normal food for animals, implying that Gomer had degraded herself to the level of a beast by becoming enslaved to sin.

## II. ISRAEL'S PRESENT DISPERSION (3:3, 4)

1. Israel shall be restored but only after a long period of disciplinary probation, a period of testing. God says it will be for "many days" (3:3, 4).
2. After "many days" Israel will be restored (3:5).
3. "Thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee" (3:3b) means that Gomer would no longer have relations with other men, nor would she have a physical relationship with Hosea. A strange marriage!
4. Charles Feinberg said this about Hosea 3:3 -- "Just as Gomer was placed in the position where she no longer consorted with her former paramours and yet was not in full fellowship in marriage -- a truly strange condition -- so Israel is throughout this age in a position where she is neither idolatrous nor enjoying the fellowship of God in a worship pleasing to Him."
5. Hosea 3:4 has remained true for over 2,700 years.
  - Israel has gone "many days without a king." Since Nebuchadnezzar deposed King Zedekiah, there has been no king in Jerusalem, and it will stay that way till the Lord Jesus returns and establishes His kingdom.
  - "and without prince" -- no royal family, no kingdom, etc.
  - "and without sacrifice" -- the Levitical sacrifices and the priesthood have been suspended. Sacrifices cannot be offered without the Temple and the priesthood.
  - The one and final sacrifice of Christ has been completed once for all. Referring to Christ, Hebrews 10:12 says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."
  - Every time the Passover service is observed today it's observed falsely. It can never be observed according to Scripture because the Passover lambs are not slain. Therefore, there is no Scriptural observance of the Passover today.
  - It is impossible for Jews today to observe the Passover properly -- "and without a sacrifice" (Hosea 3:4).
  - "and without an image" -- referring to Baal worship. The children of Israel abandoned their pagan images and teraphim when the Babylonians took them into

captivity about 590 B.C. Furthermore, they have been without sacrifices and priestly ephods ever since the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70.

- Unlike the Israelites of Hosea's day, the Jews today do not worship idols. During their Babylonian captivity, they learned to hate idolatry.
- And so in Israel today, there is no idolatry. But, like Hosea's unfaithful wife, Israel is still with us today but is not in a right relationship with God.
- "and without an ephod" -- the embroidered outer vest worn by the priests. The ephod was a symbol of the Levitical priesthood (cf. Exodus 28:4-9).
- "and without teraphim" -- these were ordinary household gods and idols. Genesis 31:19 says, "Rachel had stolen the images (*teraphim*) that were her father's."
- The word is transliterated in the book of Judges. Judges 17:5 says, "And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest."
- Today the Jews have no teraphim, and they have been cured of their idolatry. However, ritualism and strange traditions from the Talmud have replaced the authority of God's Word.
- Because they have rejected the Messiah they are in spiritual darkness, and will remain in darkness until God chastens them during the great tribulation.

### **III. ISRAEL'S GLORIOUS FUTURE (3:5)**

1. The best is yet to come -- "Afterward" and "in the latter days" (3:5).
2. Israel will be restored. They will "return, and seek the LORD their God" (3:5).
3. When the LORD restores Israel, the twelve tribes will be reunited (cf. 1:11). They were not united in Hosea's day and they are not united today, but they will be reunited when our Lord returns (cf. Ezekiel 37:21-28)

4. "Afterwards" Israel "shall seek the LORD their God" (3:5). In Hosea's day they were seeking after false gods (2:7).
5. Today Israel is not seeking after God. Most of them are secularists and atheists. Those that are devout (the "Orthodox") are extremely anti-Christian.
6. Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, said, "I trust and feel sure in my heart that science will bring peace to this land."
7. But there will be no peace in Israel until Israel repents and accepts Jesus as their Messiah. Zechariah 12:10 says then they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.
8. Then will Paul's words in Romans 11:26 be fulfilled -- "And so all Israel shall be saved."
9. Hosea and several of the other prophets prophesied the return of King David. He will reign under the Lord Jesus Christ as a co-regent (3:5; cf. Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25).
10. Some chafe at this and insist that "David" is merely a reference to the Messiah, but I am quite certain it is a reference to the literal David. Our Lord said in Matthew 8:11, "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
11. If the resurrected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will be in the kingdom, why not David?

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. I was reading a sermon by S. Lewis Johnson, and he quoted the German philosopher Hegel, who said Israel's history is "a dark, troublesome enigma."
2. It was "a dark, troublesome enigma" to Hegel because Hegel was an atheist.

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- 3.** For those of us who believe the Word of God there is nothing dark, troublesome, or enigmatic about the history of Israel. It is described very vividly in Hosea chapter 3.