

Hosea 3

Verse 1

Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet is committing adultery, as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.”

Hosea makes it clear that he was instructed by the Lord to retrieve his wife who had left him and was living with another man. This act of love on the part of Hosea is compared to God who still loved Israel even though they had left Him for another god.

The raisin cakes were a payment given to the “female workers” who were “priestesses” of the pagan temples. This practice of enticing men to the temple services of Baal by providing female temple workers (prostitutes) was diabolical but effective. This is reminiscent of how Moab attracted the men of Israel to worship their God.

See Numbers 25:1 -5

While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to commit infidelity with the daughters of Moab.² For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.³ So Israel became followers of Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry with Israel.⁴ And the Lord said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.”⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you kill his men who have become followers of Baal of Peor.”

The full story behind this event is recorded in Numbers 22 thru 25.

Verse 2

² So I purchased her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and a homer and a letech of barley.

His wife, Gomer, had become a slave/concubine, so Hosea paid the price of a slave.

See Exodus 21:32

³² If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his or her master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

The price paid by Hosea was partly in money, and partly in grain. A letech of barley is equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of a homer so the amount of payment given in grain was $1\frac{1}{2}$ homer which is equal to about 15 or 16 bushels of barley.

Verse 3

³ Then I said to her, “You shall live with me for many days. You shall not play the prostitute, nor shall you have another man; so I will also be toward you.”

Hosea took his “wife” back but it was under the condition that she would not play the harlot or be with any other man. In addition Hosea would not have relations with her and this arrangement would last for "many days" (a long and indefinite period of time). Again, this is symbolic of God's relationship with Israel.

Verse 4

⁴ For the sons of Israel will live for many days without a king or leader, without sacrifice or memorial stone, and without ephod or household idols.

The people of the Northern Kingdom would be deported and unable to enjoy the comforts of living in their own land. They would no longer be under the rule of a Jewish King, be able to offer proper sacrifices to God, or have a divine connection via the High Priest. Even their pagan household gods which they cherished would be taken away.

Someone could argue that the Northern Kingdom had already rejected these things and therefore this prohibition was not that meaningful to them, but there is a difference between choosing not to do something and being denied any access to it.

The “many days” turned out to be a very long time. For many in Northern Israel it was a lifetime and for the nation as a whole it was about 750 years, from their deportation in 722 BC until the day of Pentecost (28 AD) when believers from the Northern Kingdom were reunited with believers from the Southern Kingdom and Gentile believers.

Because the Southern Kingdom followed the same path as the Northern kingdom, but at a slower pace, they would also suffer the same indignations. Judah would be deported to Babylon in 586 BC and remain there for 70 years. During that time they had no Jewish King, no temple, no sacrifices, and no Holydays. However, a small remnant was allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. However, even the faithful, would suffer the loss of some of these things for a period of time during the last 400 years before the Messiah appeared.

Verse 5

⁵ Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days.

Afterward refers to the time after verse 4 when Israel is “without a king or leader, without sacrifice or memorial stone, and without ephod or household idols”. After this period of time Israel will seek the Lord their God and the Messiah. We know that "David their king" cannot mean King David who had long ago passed away but rather this is a reference to Jesus the Messiah.

See Acts 2:29 - 31

²⁹ “Brothers, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ So because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. ³² It is this Jesus whom God raised up, a fact to which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore, since He has been exalted at the right hand of God, and has received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
³⁵ Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”’

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

When it says “the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God” it is clear that this is referring to all the faithful people of both kingdoms. Many of the Jews rejected the Christ and these people were no longer considered “the sons of Israel”.

See Romans 2:28 - 29

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.

Paul made a similar observation in the Book of Galatians.

See Galatians 3:28 - 29

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

God had divorced the worldly Israel that had rejected Him and went after the many false gods that catered to the flesh. He then formed a New Covenant with true believers be they Jew or Gentile. We should not be surprised by this because we see the same thing in the "church" today. Some in the church are faithful followers of Christ and His teachings and some are not but Christ will make that separation on the day he returns.

See Matthew 25:31 – 33

³¹ "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left.