The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 3**

* **3:1-5– Love the adulteress**
* **Verse 1**– This chapter has some similarities to 1:2-9 in which God speaks to Hosea to undertake a command and Hosea does as he is told. The command is a unique one such as in 1:2. Hosea must love and take a woman who is an adulteress. Hosea’s love is protective and unselfish, but the woman’s love is inherently selfish.
* Is this woman a different person than Gomer? Some suggest that may be the case because of the language of 2:14-23 in which God marries a “new” Israel. However, there is nothing that would otherwise indicate that the woman spoken of here is not Gomer.
* From chapter 2, it seems clear that a divorce took place between Hosea and Gomer due to her infidelities and sin (2:2). She went after other lovers (2:5, 7, 10, 12, 13) and abandoned her marriage. The language in verse 1 would seem to indicate rather strongly that Hosea has still loved Gomer in spite of her sin (Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband).
* The text removes further doubts by drawing a parallel with Hosea’s love for the woman to God’s love for Israel. Throughout the book thus far, Hosea’s marriage has symbolized God’s marriage to Israel so this would indicate this is Gomer.
* It must be understood that God’s love for His faithless people Israel is the driving point for Hosea to go and take his wife back. It isn’t the other way around. This demonstrates how selfless and sacrificial God’s love is (Neh. 9:18-19, 31; Psa. 106:43-46; Jer. 3:12-14; Hos. 11:8).
* This is a difficult command having the understanding that Gomer’s character doesn’t seem to have changed. She is yet and adulteress but Hosea, nevertheless, must go and love her and take her back even as God did with Israel time and time again.
* They consistently turned to other gods and loved raisin cakes (2 Sam. 6:19; sweets made from dried grapes). As in chapter 2, a clear picture of self-indulgence and reliance on physical things is stressed here (2:5, 12). Even is all this, God still loved them.
* **Verse 2**– The text here speaks of the price Hosea had to pay to get his wife back. He obeys God and goes to get his wife back. Somewhere along the path she had chosen for herself, she became a slave. The price that was paid in coin and in kind, seems to have totaled the amount necessary to purchase a slave (Ex. 21:32).
* Hosea clearly could not come up with all the money in coins, so he had to resort to other forms of payment for Gomer. The idea is that he did whatever was necessary to redeem his wife and to cancel her debt.
* **Verse 3**– Hosea lists a series of instructions Gomer must follow in order to be restored. She will remain with him for many days (something unusual for a prostitute; indication of permanence) and she will cease in the practice of her sin.
* She will not be engaging in any sexual relations of any kind not even with her husband. The idea is that she needs to be trained, reformed and chastened in order to prove her faithfulness, love and repentance. Engaging in any sexual activity would be a stumbling block as it were.
* **Verse 4**– The parallel scenario of Hosea’s relationship with Gomer as it relates to the nation of Israel is now told. Like Gomer, Israel will remain many days and they will have no king or prince (Deut. 28:36). *“Their national sovereignty and social infrastructure will be eliminated”* (Stuart).
* No sacrifice, pillar, ephod or household idols will be known during this time. All these are associated with religious practices both lawful and unlawful. Sacrifice and pillar have reference to their pagan worship and rituals (Deut. 16:22; Lev. 26:31).
* The ephod was a priestly garment worn and it contained a pocket for Urim (light-sided dice) and Thummim (dark-sided dice) which were thrown in combination in order to receive answers from God (Ex. 28:4, 30; Lev. 8:7-8; Num. 27:21; Judg. 17:5; 1 Sam. 28:6).
* The household idols or teraphim were consulted in pagan divination (Gen. 31:19; Judg. 18:17-24; 1 Sam. 19:13; Ezek. 21:21; Mic. 5:11-14). The sacrifice system along with the ephod were established by God and meant for His glory and not for the people’s demise. They were good when used according to God’s will.
* The pillar and household idols were abominable. Together all these things are evil because Israel turned what was good into evil and looked for other avenues to continue their sin (Isa. 5:20).
* The days of testing and reformation (like Gomer) seems to refer to the period of captivity. The people will not have any of these things which they have loved but they will yearn to hear from God but not receive an answer.
* During these days they would come to their senses and understand their reliance and dependence of God and they would repent and seek to return to Him in faithfulness, justice and righteousness.
* **Verse 5**– After these days, Israel will seek God and their king David. Like chapters 1 and 2, the time here is not specified but because of what is said in the verse and other passages, we know it is referring to the Messianic age.
* The use of the words “return” and “seek” carry with it the idea of repentance and humility (Hos. 2:7; Lk. 15:17-20). Through their suffering they will have hope (Hos. 2:15; Ezek. 37:11-14).
* Whom they are seeking is of utmost importance. Yahweh is first mentioned followed by David their king. It is without a doubt that this is speaking of Jesus. It is striking that the use of both these descriptions is used as it stresses Jesus’ deity and sovereignty.
* While His name is never explicitly mentioned we know it is Jesus because of the prophecies (2 Sam. 7; Jer. 30:9; 33:17; Ezek. 34:11-31; 37:24-28). The use of David here is in reference to a person of the Davidic line (Matt. 1:1-17).
* The singularity here emphasizes total dependence on God and no one else. No longer will they seek for foreign assistance. This King will fulfill everything. It is interesting to note that Israel’s beginning downfall began with their plea for a human leader and their rejection of God (1 Sam. 8:4-20). In a turn of events, their restoration only comes with the help of God and not a human leader.
* The attitude with which they seek and return is not apathetic nor complacent. They come trembling (Deut. 6:2; 10:12; Psa. 111:10; 112:1; Prov. 1:7; Ecc. 12:13; 1 Pet. 2:17). This fear of God is the reverence we have for the Almighty ruler. The respect and fear that drives us to serve God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength was lacking in Israel and thus they fell to their demise.
* This attitude must be present once again in seeking God for without it we cannot know Him. God’s goodness is revealed to those who seek Him in this manner and those who understand their relationship with Him is serious.
* The timing is the last days which refers to the Messianic age (Ezek. 38:16; Mic. 4:1; Gal. 4:4) which fulfills all these prophecies of the coming Christ.