

HOSEA: LOOKING BEYOND JUDGMENT TO RESTORATION
IV: God's Grace And Holiness In Gomer's And Israel's Restorations
(Hosea 3:1-5)

I. Introduction

- A. God's punishment is very painful, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12:11.
- B. This was the theme of Hosea, the "death-bed prophet of Israel" and the last prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel before it fell to Assyria in divine judgment. (ESV Introduction to Hosea)
- C. Hosea 3:1-5 presents the greatness of God's grace and His holiness in the restorations of Hosea's adulterous wife Gomer and of spiritually adulterous Israel. We view the passage for our insight and application:

II. God's Grace And Holiness In Gomer's And Israel's Restorations, Hosea 3:1-5.

- A. In Hosea 3:1, God called Hosea to illustrate His great "love" (*'ahabah*) for Israel in spite of her unfaithfulness to Him by again loving a woman who was loved by another man but was his adulterous wife. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1387) Just as Hosea's estranged wife Gomer had left him for another man, so Israel had turned to loving raisin cakes in Baal worship in place of loving the Lord, *Ibid.*
- B. God had Hosea purchase Gomer because she may have become a temple prostitute or she was the legal property of someone else who used her as a mistress or hired her out as a prostitute, Hosea 3:2a; *Ibid.* Hosea bought her for the price of a slave, what amounted to 30 shekels of silver, but he paid half of the price in silver and half of it in the cheap grain of barley likely because he was not financially wealthy, Hosea 3:2b; *Ibid.*
- C. Having thus purchased Gomer at a significant cost for himself, Hosea commanded her to dwell with him as his wife, sequestered for many days that she no longer function as a prostitute or an adulterous companion of another man, and Hosea said that he would be committed to Gomer as her husband, Hosea 3:3.
- D. Gomer's long isolation typified Israel's exile when the nation would be separated from ungodly institutions and practices, indicating God's great holiness that matched His loving grace toward Israel, *Ibid.*, Hosea 3:4:
 - 1. Israel's absence of a king and a prince typified her loss of national sovereignty in exile, Hosea 3:4a; *Ibid.*
 - 2. The absence of a sacrifice and sacred stones "meant the cessation of formal religious activity," v. 4b; *Ibid.*:
 - a. Though sacrifices had been ordered by the Lord in the book of Leviticus, Israel's sacrifices had become corrupted with Baal worship, so God would cause Israel to lack opportunity to sacrifice to Him, Hos. 4:19.
 - b. Sacred stones (*massebah*) were initially a proper part of the worship of Israel's patriarchs (Gen. 28:18, 22; 31:13), but such stones had since then become associated with pagan religion in Canaan, so God outlawed Israel's use of them when she entered the Promised Land, Lev. 26:1; Deut. 16:22, *Ibid.*, p. 1388.
 - c. Nevertheless, Israel had violated this stipulation after entering the Promised Land by erecting such stones for the worship of false local Baal gods, 2 Kings 3:2; 10:26-27; 17:10; Hosea 10:1; Micah 5:13; *Ibid.*
 - 3. Israel's separation from "ephod" and "idol" alluded "to methods of divination" that God hated, Hosea 3:4c:
 - a. The word "ephod" could refer to part of the Hebrew high priest's clothes, but in this context, it was a pagan cult object (Jud. 8:27; Roland De Vaux, Ancient Israel, 2 vols. 1965, p. 350; *Ibid.*, B. K. C., O. T.)
 - b. Idols (*terapim*) were items used in divination that God detested (1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Kings 23:24), *Ibid.*
 - c. Both the "ephod" and "idol" items mentioned here in this context were instruments of divination that had been confiscated by the Danites and used in their false worship in Judges 18:27-31, *Ibid.*
- E. However, after Israel's exile, she will be spiritually transformed from all these evil practices, Hosea 3:5:
 - 1. Israel will repent and seek the Lord instead of seek after false gods, Hosea 3:5a.
 - 2. She will accept the authority of the Davidic monarchy that she rejected in 1 Kings 12. (Hosea 3:5b)
 - 3. Israel will approach the Lord for worship with great reverence instead of her past arrogance before God, realizing that her agricultural blessings came from Him and not from the false Baal gods, Hosea 3:5c; *Ibid.*
 - 4. This transformation will occur in the latter days, the days of the Messianic Kingdom, Hosea 3:5d; *Ibid.*

Lesson: *In great grace, God will take spiritually adulterous Israel back as His bride like God had Hosea take back his adulterous wife Gomer. However, along with God's great grace was His demand for holiness, for complete separation from all that was part of Israel's sinful past, what will occur in the Messianic Kingdom when Israel will no longer seek after false gods, but turn to God, when she will no longer reject the Davidic monarchy, but seek it, when she will no longer be proud toward God but humbly reverent, realizing that all her blessings come from Him.*

Application: *(1) May we praise God for His grace to us in Christ and also separate from sin. (2) May we realize that such holiness means parting from things that even border on godlessness (like the patriarch's sacred stones).*