

Hosea 3:1 ¶ Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

Hosea 3:2 So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

Hosea 3:3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also be for thee.

Hosea 3:4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim:

Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

The LORD directs Hosea to go and love “a woman,” in reference to Gomer. He explains to Hosea that this is necessary to illustrate the love that God has for the children of Israel who have rejected Him and given their love and devotion to false gods.

At the time of this instruction, Gomer doesn't deserve to be recognized with the title of wife any more than Israel could be recognized as God's wife. They were both in estrangement of their own choosing, yet both were to be restored to relationship with their “husband” because of His love and provision.

Note that the command to love emphasizes that love is a matter of choice; it is not dependent upon feelings. God would never command us to do something that was impossible for us to do. Jesus declared this same truth.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

It's also important to note that Hosea didn't start complaining and trying to get out of what he was told to do; he simply obeyed. He immediately went to redeem Gomer. Research indicates that the amount paid reflects the going rate for a slave.

When Hosea brought her home, he enforced a time of celibacy between them for “many days.” This, too, pictures how God will deal with his bride, the people of Israel. They will experience a time of no real intimacy in their relationship until He restores them under the new covenant when He establishes His kingdom. Point is made that this time of separation will be a time in which Israel will be without a king, a time without the ability to offer sacrifices, a time when idol worship is no longer practiced, and a time without the benefit of God's supernatural guidance by means of the ephod, and a time when consulting idols will not be allowed. This is a valid description of Israel for the last 1900 years.

I think verse 5 verifies that the time of restoration will be a time when Israel repents and seeks the LORD and David's Son, Jesus, who will reestablish the

throne of David in Jerusalem. They will be in awe of the LORD and His blessings upon them. The prophet is also very clear in establishing the time for this restoration as in "the latter days."

This reminds me again of the words of the Savior: "...for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, *"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"* " (Matthew 23:39)