

# Israel Will Return to God

Hosea 3:1-5

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3/24/2024



## **Hosea 2:14-23 (NIV)**

*The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”<sup>2</sup> So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.<sup>3</sup> Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”<sup>4</sup> For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods.<sup>5</sup> Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.*

## **v1 – What did God command Hosea?**

God directed Hosea to go back to his wife, even though she was committing adultery. It wasn't in the past; it was in the present; yet he was commanded to go back to her and to love her.

## **Why wasn't Gomer's infidelity cause for divorce?**

Though Deuteronomy 24:1 and Matthew 19:7-8 permit divorce when adultery breaks the marriage union, it by no means commands divorce.

- If God commanded divorce in the case of adultery, then He would go against His own command here.

## **What principle is at work here regarding godly love?**

Hosea is directed to love, even when it must have been hard to love. We are filled with many romantic illusions about love, and one of these illusions is that love has very little to do with our will — we are just “captured” by love and follow whatever course it leads.

- But Scripture shows us another way: That love is largely a matter of the will, and when we direct ourselves to love someone God tells us we must love, it can and will happen.
- This is why “We're not in love anymore” isn't valid grounds for divorce. It assumes that love is something beyond or outside of our will.

## **How is godly love radically different from the human concept of love?**

Most people think love is an emotion which can be fleeting, you can fall in and out of love, or it is a transaction where I will love you only if you love me back. But godly agape love is an unconditional, sacrificial act of the will where you love the other person whether they are worthy of your love or not.

## **Is godly agape love easy or hard?**

Jesus also said that His followers are even to have agape love for their enemies in Matthew 5:44.

- Agape love is not a typical, natural form of love. True agape love is only possible with God's help.
- Galatians 5:22 says that agape love is the fruit of the Spirit that only results from having a right relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ.

A person can imitate agape love for a time but true agape love becomes apparent when it is applied for the long haul.

## **Why did God command Hosea to go back to his still-unfaithful wife?**

Not only for the sake of Hosea and his wife Gomer, but also so that they would become a living lesson of the LORD's relationship with His people. They were still steeped in spiritual adultery, yet the LORD still loved them.

## **What should result from growing in our understanding of God's love?**

When we think of the greatness of God's love and compassion towards us, it should make us much more loving, compassionate, and forgiving towards others.

## **v2 – Why did Hosea have to “buy” his own wife?**

He didn't have to, but as a display of love and commitment, he went the “extra mile,” beyond what was expected or even reasonable.

- In providing this way for his own wife, Hosea also showed her: “I can give you what the others can. You don't need them. Let me show you how I can provide for your needs.”

### **v3 – Why do you think Hosea told Gomer, “you shall stay with me many days”?**

The point of paying Gomer wasn't just to get her to give up her trade as a prostitute. It was to bring her into relationship with Hosea, her husband. Relationship and living together was the goal.

### **v4 – What was prophesied for Israel?**

In her fallen state, Israel will not have what she needs as a nation:

- *Without king or prince*: national or political leadership
- *Without sacrifice or sacred pillar*: spiritual service at the temple
- *Without ephod or teraphim*: idol worship

### **How has this prophecy been fulfilled?**

During the Diaspora, Israel did not have what constitutes a nation, much less a nation that represents God. This condition for Israel began in 70 AD and it has begun to change in 1948. Israel still does not have a temple which will come to an end sometime in the future.

### **What was the significance of ephod and teraphim?**

In the Old Testament, the ephod has two meanings. In one group of passages, it signifies a garment; in another, very probably an image.

- As a garment the ephod is referred to in the priestly ordinances as a part of the official dress of the high priest. It was to be made of threads “of blue and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen” and embroidered in gold thread “with cunning work” (Exodus 28:4; 29:5; 39:2; Leviticus 8:7).

The word ephod has an entirely different meaning in the second group of passages, all of which belong to the historical books.

- Judges 8:26–27, Gideon made an “ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah,” where it was worshiped by all Israel.
- Judges 17:5, Micah made an ephod and teraphim, or idol, for his sanctuary.

Some scholars have suggested that the connection between the idol and the garment is that the idol was originally clothed in a linen garment, and the term ephod gradually came to describe the idol as a whole.

- Throughout the Bible, teraphim is used in conjunction with idolatry and pagan worship.

### **How has Israel been without ephod and teraphim during the Diaspora?**

They have certainly been without the classical idol worship involving little statues. Indeed, Israel during the Diaspora has by and large has become secular.

### **How is secular humanism actually idolatry?**

Any religion involving worship of anything other than the God of Scripture is idolatry; worshiping the creation instead of the Creator.

- Secular humanism is a religion that effectively worships human reasoning holding it superior to God's revelation.

### **How do all three of these things Israel will be without fit together (national leadership, temple, idols)?**

Good question... it would seem like not having national leadership or temple service are bad things while not having idol worship is a good thing. But on an individual level, they are all good things intended to drive Israel to God...

- Having a king was Israel's idea to be more like the other nations, not God's idea.
- Temple worship is not necessary in New Covenant. *Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father”* (John 4:21).

### **v5 – What will end the time Israel will be without leadership and worship of either God or idols?**

The time of political and spiritual ruin will end with Israel returning to the land where they will also seek the LORD again.

- This will mark their restoration — and there will be no restoration until they turn back to the LORD.

### **How is it Israel will also seek David, their king?**

This shows that this prophecy will be ultimately fulfilled in the millennial kingdom, where David will reign over Israel (Isaiah 55:3-5, Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23-25).

### **Will this actually be the long-dead King David or is it just a reference to Jesus, the son of David?**

The prince is a reference to the King over Israel during the Millennial Kingdom:

*Ezekiel 44:3 – As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.*

Old Testament saints will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation:

*Daniel 12:1-2 – And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

**What is the principle behind Israel's restoration that applies to individuals in the here and now?**

Any individual right now can enjoy this blessing of restored relationship if they will turn back to the LORD.

**How is it Israel will come *trembling to the Lord*?**

At the end of the Tribulation, Israel will be at the end of themselves and sincerely turn as a nation to the Lord for deliverance.

**What applications come to mind from this passage?**

- Godly love is a sacrificial act of the will, not a fleeting human emotion.
- God's love should make us more loving, compassionate, and forgiving towards others.
- Israel's Diaspora is ending, we are living in the time leading up to Israel returning to the Lord.
- We can enjoy the blessings of restored relationship by turning back to the LORD.