

The Humanly “Impossible” Command (Part II)

Hosea 3:3-5

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Introduction: This morning we looked at just the first 2 verses of Hosea 3. There we saw the impossible (humanly speaking) command & the improbable compassion of Hosea. I reminded you of the theme of this Book: God’s unconditional love for an undeserving people. That command to Hosea included not only the command of love, but also the cost of love, & the contrast of loves. The emphasis was upon the word “*bought*” in verse 2, which speaks of redemption. We looked at the N.T. development of that word as being redeemed in the slave market, removed from the slave market, & released from slavery.

Tonight we come to verses 3-5. Here I see 2 main thoughts: the conditions from Hosea (:3) & the comparison of Hosea (of Gomer to Israel). Let’s read the entire chapter & then concentrate on verses 3-5.

I. The conditions from Hosea (:3)

A. Gomer is to abide with him:

1. “*For many days*” > a probationary period?
2. Gomer is given a chance to “prove” herself.

B. Gomer is to abhor the part of a harlot:

1. Contrast 1:2, “*wife of whoredoms*” > the inner characteristic view (not her outward behavior).
2. Consider the cleansing power of God > Isaiah 1:18 & 55:7.

C. Gomer is to abstain from all other men:

1. She is to be true & faithful to Hosea.
2. She is not to have any desire or attraction to another man (“eyes only for” Hosea?).

D. Gomer is to adhere to Hosea (“*so will I also be for thee*”):

1. Hosea will be true & faithful to her (“eyes only for” Gomer?).
2. Hosea commits to provide for & protect Gomer.

II. The comparison of Hosea (of Gomer to Israel)

A. Israel’s exile (:4)

[Note the objects taken away from Israel – 3 pairs of 2.]

1. Israel will be “*without a king, & without prince*” >
 - a. The removal of their kings & the Davidic dynasty.
 - b. The rejection of Christ as their Messiah – Luke 19:14 & John 19:15.
2. Israel will be “*without a sacrifice, & without an image*” >
 - a. The destruction of the Temple left them with no place for sacrifice.
 - b. The definition of “*an image*” is a large stone or monument, erected to Baal (see Ex. 23:24 & Lev. 26:1).
3. Israel will be “*without an ephod, & without teraphim*” >
 - a. An “*ephod*” was the shoulder dress of the high priest, containing the Urim & Thummin.
 - b. The “*teraphim*” were house-hold idols – see Genesis 31:34 & Judges 17:5 for examples.

Summary: “The prophet mentions objects connected with both the worship of Jehovah & that of idols, because they were both mixed together in Israel, & for the purpose of showing to the people that the Lord would take away both the Jehovah worship & also the worship of idols, along with the independent civil government” (Keil).

Application? Israel was guilty of “syncretism” (“the attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought”). See II Kings 17:32-33 for an example. They had mixed the holy with the forbidden & in so doing had adulterated their worship. What about today? Is there an attempt to blend the world’s philosophies, values, & music with the practice of Christianity? Has the Church fallen into the trap of entertainment instead of engaging with God in worship? Has the Gospel been “adulterated” or “watered down” by the absence of repentance or the acceptance of a false Gospel by works (cf. “Evangelicals & Catholics Together”)? Has the church service been reduced to what I can get out of it without regard to what I can give in my worship? Are there any evidences of syncretism in the Church today?

B. Israel’s expectation (:5)

1. The **context** > “*Afterward*” & “*latter days.*”
 - a. Isaiah 2:2, “*...in the last days...*”
 - b. Jeremiah 30:3, “*For, lo, the days come...*”
2. The **conditions** >
 - a. Israel shall “*return*” (22 references; cf. 6:1 & 14:1-2). This speaks of her past unfaithfulness, then repentance, & future devotion.
 - b. Israel shall “*seek*” –
 - (1) “*The LORD their God*” – cf. Jeremiah 50:4-5.
 - (2) “*David their king*” – cf. Jeremiah 30:9 (& cf. Ezekiel 34:23-24).
Note: This speaks of Christ the Messiah & His millennial reign.
 - c. Israel shall “*fear the LORD & His goodness*” –
 - (1) Walking & serving in “*the fear of the LORD*” – see Proverbs study.
 - (2) Enjoying the goodness of God manifested in all of His gifts.

Conclusion: Hosea chapter 3 speaks of redemption & restoration for Israel, illustrated in the home life of Hosea & Gomer. Consider that the word “*love*” or a related root word is found some 20 times in this Book. Sadly, a majority of the references refer to Israel’s illicit love, her love for idols (spiritual adultery). Yet the more brightly then shines God’s love, as seen here in 3:1 as well as in 11:1, 4 & 14:4. This love is more than an expression of affection; it is an act of the will. “It designates a compelling inclination of the heart to a chosen object. From the outset, God’s love has been a matter of choice; He decides to love His people, & the reason for that loving choice is not in their attractiveness or worthiness. God’s love is totally of grace. The motive of God’s gracious, electing love is within Himself, not in the objects of His choice. This is what makes grace so amazing” (RSB). Have you seen yourself revealed in Romans 5:8, “*But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*”? Do you continue to stand amazed at the truth of John 3:16? Have you experienced the amazing grace of God? If not, why not respond tonight? If so, I remind you again of Psalm 107:2, “*Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.*”