

Hosea 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress—God commands Hosea to take back Gomer after her adultery, mirroring Yahweh's relentless love for wayward Israel. **According to the love of the LORD** (בְּאַהֲבָת הָאֱלֹהִים)—the comparison is explicit: Hosea's painful redemption of his unfaithful wife pictures God's covenant love (אהובָה, ahavah). **Who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine**—(אֲנָשִׁים עֲתָבִים) raisin cakes were used in fertility cult worship. Israel traded Yahweh for sensual idolatry, yet God pursues them still. This chapter prophesies Israel's long exile (v.4) followed by restoration and return to 'David their king' (v.5)—Messiah.

Historical Context

Hosea received this command to redeem Gomer from slavery/prostitution during the later phase of his ministry, after Israel's persistent covenant violations had made judgment certain. The parallel between Hosea buying back his unfaithful wife and God's redemptive love for Israel despite their adultery with 'flagons of wine' (associated with Baal fertility rituals) provided a living embodiment of divine grace. This prophetic sign-act occurred during the chaotic years following Jeroboam II's death (753 BC), when Israel lurched between Egyptian and Assyrian

alliances while the priesthood and monarchy had thoroughly corrupted worship, yet God's covenant love (hesed) remained steadfast.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Hosea 3:1 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

Then said	of the LORD	H413	H5750	H1980	and love	a woman	and love
H559	H3068				H157	H802	H157
of her friend	yet an adulteress	H7453	H5003	H160	according to the love	of the LORD	H853
					H3068		
toward the children	of Israel	H1121	H3478	H1992	who look	H413	gods
					H6437	H430	H312
and love	flags	H157	H809	H6025	of wine		to other

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:22 (References God): Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Jeremiah 31:20 (References Lord): Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

Hosea 11:8 (References Israel): How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

Micah 7:7 (References God): Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

Psalms 123:2 (References God): Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Jeremiah 3:20 (References Lord): Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

Zechariah 1:16 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

1 Peter 4:3 (Parallel theme): For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: