

Chapter 3

3:1

Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, As we saw the remarriage of God to Israel in the last chapter, Hosea is now going to demonstrate it with his wife... who has apparently left and been “put away” in like manner. **love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery,** She did what she was doing when he found her.

3:2-5

2 So I Hosea speaks in the first person for first time. One might wonder why the drastic change from 3rd person in chapter 1. **bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.** Many are not sure what this really means since we’re not sure what a “homer” really is.¹ The main thing is to see that the cost was that of “worthlessness:” **barley** for a woman.² **3 And I said to her, “You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you.”** Hosea seems to be saying that he is not going to approach her as a husband just yet: intimacy is not immediately expected. 2:16 gives us the reality that when Hosea buys Gomer in 3:4 it is a master/slave relationship and not a husband/wife relationship. Verse 4 is a development of this reality. **4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.** There will be minimal opportunity to worship outwardly—unrighteously or otherwise. **5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king.** Certainly, there is reason to wonder whether this is actually the return of **David** or if it may be fulfilled genetically in His Son, Jesus (Romans 1:3). **They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.**

¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 100.

² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 652.

Chapter 4

4:4-5

“Now let no man contend, or rebuke another; For your people are like those who contend with the priest. 5 Therefore you shall stumble in the day; The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; And I will destroy your mother. This is pretty well promised the first time in chapter 3:2-3.

4:6-9

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Nehemiah 8 confirms that it was the priest and the Levite who were responsible for the knowledge of the Scripture to be known among the people. **Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me;** Mark 14:63 is telltale here. God rejected the High Priest (and by extension, the temple and the priesthood) in view of Leviticus 21:10. They rejected Christ, and God rejected them. It is the unchanging character of God that gives us our third connection to the Gospel of Mark. Mark 12:9 also takes the liberty (as does Matthew) of telling us that God has taken the kingdom from a nation that should have had it (as led by its priests and prophets, Hosea 4:4-5) and giving it to others (by virtue of their King, the Christ).

8 They eat up the sin of My people; They set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And it shall be: like people, like priest. This reminds the reader of Ezekiel 16:44: “like mother; like daughter” **So I will punish them for their ways, And reward them for their deeds.** The complaint continues in 5:1.

4:10-13

For they shall eat, but not have enough; They shall commit harlotry, but not increase; Because they have ceased obeying the LORD. 11 “Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. Thus says Proverbs 20:1 and Habakkuk 2:15 to some degree. To what do they drive their enslaved? **12 My people ask counsel from their wooden idols,** This baffles the Psalmist of Psalm 115.

13 They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops, And burn incense on the hills, Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, Because their shade is good. It doesn't take much...just need some nice shade, and we whore.

4:14-15

14 “I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry, Nor your brides when they commit adultery; They're just doing what they were taught to do from you. For the men themselves go apart with harlots, And offer sacrifices with a ritual harlot. Therefore people who do not understand will be trampled. 15 “Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Let not Judah offend. Judah was saved from Israel's doom, and they should be thusly warned. **Do not come up to Gilgal,**

...it appears that the Gilgal of this verse is the location near the Jordan that Joshua made his first base of operations after crossing into Canaan (Josh 4:19). There the men of the nation were circumcised in preparation for Israel's first Passover in the land (Josh 5:7–12), and from there Jericho was taken. Gilgal was on Samuel's annual circuit (1 Sam

7:16), and it is the setting for much of the story of Samuel and Saul (e.g., 1 Sam 11:14–15). The people of Judah welcomed David back at Gilgal after the war with Absalom (2 Sam 19:15). A group of Elisha’s disciples resided there (2 Kgs 4:38). Thus one can say that Gilgal was a place of great significance in the spiritual history of Israel, and the people had every reason to consider it sacred. Unfortunately, it went from being a shrine for pilgrims to a center of apostasy, and by the eighth century not only Hosea but Amos as well was counseling people to stay away from there (Amos 4:4; 5:5).³

Nor go up to Beth⁸ Aven, Nor swear an oath, saying, ‘As the LORD lives’—

Beth Aven is almost certainly Bethel; Amos also associates Gilgal with Bethel, and employing the same pun that Hosea uses, he declares that Bethel would become “nothing” (āwen). Amos ministered in the reigns of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel and thus overlaps and slightly precedes Hosea. It appears that Amos’s use of this wordplay is original, and that Hosea is following patterns Amos had already set.¹⁰⁸

Bethel was, if anything, even more sacred than Gilgal. Abraham camped there (Gen 12:8), and while sleeping there Jacob saw his vision of the stairway into heaven and gave the place its name, “house of God” (bêt-’ēl; Gen 28:11–18; 31:1–15). Later God revealed himself to Jacob as the “God of Bethel” (Gen 31:13)...⁴

4:16-19

16 “For Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn calf; Now the LORD will let them forage Like a lamb in open country. 17 “Ephraim Used 32 out of the 180 Old Testament times right here in this prophet (this being the first). This should alert the reader to the uniqueness with which Hosea is using the term. If Amos and Isaiah are his peers, and it was usage specific to their time we would expect a similar density of usage, but Isaiah uses it a mere 11 times in 66 chapters while Amos uses it none at all. What do we say of all this? Perhaps **Ephraim**, as one of the ten tribes of the north is used as the shorthand title for “the ten tribes of Israel” like “Judah” is already used as shorthand for “the southern two tribes of Benjamin and Judah?” This seems reasonable.⁵

is joined to idols, Let him alone. This takes one to Matthew 15:14 where Jesus gives particular attention to “leave alone” certain who lead the blind. Is there a connection here? **18 Their drink is rebellion, They commit harlotry continually. Her rulers dearly love dishonor. 19 The wind has wrapped her up in its wings,** This could have reference to the “swiftness with which she was judged” or the “thoroughness with which she was carried away” or the “fickleness of a people so easily stirred by the winds of change.” **And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.** They will see just how ridiculous their works really were.

³Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary, 136.

⁸Lit. *House of Idolatry or Wickedness*

¹⁰⁸ Also the use of the threefold warning, so significant in Hosea’s literary setting, seems to be adapted from Amos (see, e.g., Amos 5:5).

⁴Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, 136.

⁵1 Kings 12:21-23 should satisfy anybody’s doubt as to the division assumed in this paragraph.