

## God's Persevering Love for His Own

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August 24, 2014

Scriptural Text: Hosea 3:1-5, ESV

One of my most respected pastors, who is now in Heaven, called this chapter “the greatest chapter in all of the Bible.” It is interesting because if we were to list the ten greatest chapters in the Bible, Hosea 3 might not be in our list, but it is in his and I believe he is right. It is the greatest chapter because it tells about the greatest story.

We remember Hosea is a prophet whom God spoke to and said, “Marry a woman who is unfaithful, a prostitute.”<sup>1</sup> He did that and what happened after that is that she continued in her unfaithfulness to such an extent where they became estranged. By the time we open up Chapter 3, she is living with another man; she is separated, or estranged, from her husband Hosea. God comes to Hosea to speak a new word to him.

### Hosea Redeems His Wife

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.”

<sup>2</sup> So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech<sup>2</sup> of barley. <sup>3</sup> And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” <sup>4</sup> For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. <sup>5</sup> Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

In one Peanuts cartoon features Lucy looking fondly at Schroeder. We know the context: she is infatuated with Schroeder. Schroeder is bent over playing the piano and Lucy is leaning with her elbow against the piano, looking longingly in adoration at Schroeder. She wishes so much that Schroeder would return her love. Schroeder is not paying any attention, so she asks him, “Schroeder, do you know what love is?” For a moment Schroeder sits up and he stops playing. He answers, “Love, noun, to be fond of, a strong affection for, attachment or devotion to a person or persons.” Then he bends over and begins playing the piano again. Lucy sighs and says, “On paper he is great!”

That describes many believers. On paper we are great. The personal reality, however, does not match our mental understanding. We know what is to love God and what it looks like to love our neighbor. We can describe it sometimes even eloquently, but ours often is a paper love. It lacks shoe leather. It is thin and one dimensional. In 1 John 3, we read,

<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Let us not love God simply in word or talk, but in deed and truth. Let us not love one another in word or talk, but in deed and truth. What can be said of us cannot be said of God. Indeed, God is great on paper, but He is even more spectacular in reality. That is the theme of Hosea 3, the theme of God's amazing, persevering love for us.

Hosea 3 presents for us one of the greatest love stories ever told. In all of human history and all of human literature I cannot think of another story like it. It is not a love story in the classic sense, in which two, sweet, innocent young adults fall deeply in love with one another and then experience some obstacles to their love and then overcome those obstacles by the power of their love for one another and hold onto each other. No, Hosea 3 is not *Les Miserables*. This love story is not even slightly sentimental. The story of Hosea replaces the warmth of sentiment with the depth of commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> Hosea 2:1

<sup>2</sup> A liquid measure equivalent to half a homer and containing about 5 1/2 bushels.

Here we find a faithful and loving husband whose wife is completely unfaithful and unloving toward him. This husband has no logical reason to love her any more. She has pursued so many other lovers so resolutely for such a long time that she is now completely estranged from her husband, living in squalor with one of her lovers, and the man she is with does not value her. In fact, no one does.

Gomer has lost her womanly charm. She is squeaking by in a loveless existence. It is here in the depths of her own desperation and destitution that her husband does something extraordinary, in a display of love so irrational and to cause us readers to question whether this kind of love is even healthy, or even right and good.

Through this story of Hosea's love for his wife Gomer, God opens a window to us so that we can see the nature of His love for His own people. We learn God's love is not so much the warm, fuzzy variety, rather God's love is the strong, unwavering kind. The main idea presented in Hosea 3 is simply: God's persevering love transforms unfaithful people into faithful worshippers. God in love redeems us and He makes us His very own.

Where do we see God's love most powerfully displayed? It is at the cross of Jesus. It was at the cross of Jesus where God sacrificed the most deserving of sons in order to rescue the most undeserving of sinners. Jesus freely offered Himself to pay the price of our sin so we could enjoy a reconciled relationship with Himself. This all happened while we were unfaithful sinners. While we were enemies of God, Jesus redeemed us through the price of His own love in order to rescue us and restore us into right relationship. It is not wonder John would write, in 1 John 3,

<sup>1a</sup> See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God...

When we read Hosea 3, it is important that we identify with the right person. This is where we often miss it in Scripture; we identify with the wrong person. Often times, when we read Hosea, we identify with Hosea. We are the one's who are faithful to our wife. We are the one's who love in spite of not being loved. I urge you, do not let yourself place yourself in Hosea's shoes. Hosea represents God in this story.

To be sure, we, as believers, are called to be godlike, but in this story Hosea represents God. Gomer represents us. We are the unfaithful wife. We are the adulteress. We are the desperate and destitute woman whom sin has utterly ruined. We are Gomer. Only through a correct identification will our proud hearts be broken by a prevailing love that comes from Heaven toward us. We will miss the impact of this story altogether if we do not, first, identify our self with Gomer.

We will follow three demonstrations of love found in this chapter. First, we will see that God persists in His love for His people in spite of their unfaithfulness. Second, we will see God creates a new faithfulness in His people. Third, we will find God promises a joyful future with His people.

### **God persists in His love for His people in spite of their unfaithfulness,**

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."

Cakes of raisins were used in the worship of Baals. They loved the worship of Baal.

The first observation I would make is this: four times in this first verse the word "love" appears. Two times the word "love" is a good and praiseworthy thing. Two other times, however, the word "love" is a wicked and wrong thing.

First, we see love being used in Hosea being told to love Gomer, an awesome kind of love. We are also told the Lord loves the children of Israel, an amazing kind of love. But, then we are told Gomer is loved by another man, a wicked kind of love. Finally, the children of Israel love raisin cakes, a false worship.

In the Hebrew we find the word love is the same exact term and word. There are not two different words for this same word. We learn love is only valuable when it is directed toward the right object.

Someone may say, "I am a very loving person." Okay, but who or what are you loving? That is what makes the difference. If you are a loving person, but your love is not directed toward God and the things of God, then your love is actually a worthless and wicked thing directed toward idols and raisin cakes. The important thing to ask is not, "Am I a loving person," but who or what am I loving? If our love is not directed toward God and the things of God then our love actually condemns us.

In Hosea 1:2, God tells Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman, a prostitute, and God explains the reason, "For the land commits spiritual adultery by forsaking the Lord and worshipping other gods." Hosea's life is to be a sermon to this Nation, confronting them on their idolatry and faithlessness. Hosea obeys God. He marries Gomer and we might believe thrive underneath Hosea's marital love and his commitment to her, but she does not. She continues in her unfaithfulness.

She gives birth to three children, one of which we know to be Hosea's. The other two we are not sure. We know sometime early in the marriage she begins prostituting herself again with other men and she throws her unfaithfulness even in Hosea's face. She tells Hosea how good these other men are to her, how they give her wool and flax and wine and bread and oil. All the while it is actually Hosea who is providing these for her. Imagine the anguish endured by Hosea as a result of his wife's rejection. Yet, Hosea continues to love Gomer.

At some point Gomer leaves Hosea altogether. She now, in Hosea 3, is living with one of her lovers and she is completely estranged from her husband. Her life is becoming more and more of a mess. Her physical beauty is fading. Her desirability is waning. And, she is being mistreated more and more, yet the more she is mistreated by her other lovers, the more she looks to other lovers to help her and to love her.

It is at this point God appears to Hosea with another word. Let us imagine this conversation. God may say to Hosea, "I know Gomer is estranged from you. I know she is living with another man. You are likely fine she is away and out of your hair. She is out of your home. Your faithfulness and kindness toward her has been returned to you with unfaithfulness and cruelty. But, Hosea, go again and love her. I know she is living with another lover. I know she has spurned your love in the past. I know she has embarrassed you and hurt you deeply, but, Hosea, go, go again, and love her. I know you have gone to her before. I know she has responded to your repeated attempts with rejection, but, Hosea, go, go again, and love her."

I do not know which command was harder for Hosea to obey. The command in Chapter 1 where Hosea was commanded to marry an unfaithful woman or the command in Chapter 3 for Hosea to go, and go again, and love his unfaithful wife. I imagine Chapter 3 was even much more difficult by way of obedience.

"Why, Lord? Why must I go love her? Does not Your Law release me from my covenant obligation to her? Has not Gomer forfeited her right to my love?"

"Hosea, I want you to love her again because I love my people and I love my people with a love that never fails. I love my people with a persevering love. Even though my people still turn to other gods, even though they love these raisin cakes that are a part of their worship to other gods, I love my people. I love them and I love them again and again and again. My love for them never fails."

Jeremiah the Prophet writes this about God's love,

Lamentations 3:22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

"Even after you have spent the night at one of your lovers' house?" "Yes. Even that morning," His mercies are new"

Hosea is an illustration of God's persevering love. It is through His actions toward Gomer that God's people will understand how much God loves them and will lead them to life and joy.

How does God demonstrate His love toward us?

<sup>2</sup> So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech<sup>3</sup> of barley.

Gomer is in the sorry condition of needing to be purchased. She is destitute. She is penniless. No one cares for her. She believed her lovers took care of her because they loved her. No, they only were taking advantage of her and stripping her of her money and her dignity. Now she is no longer a lovely plaything to be enjoyed by other men. She has become a slave. She is not free. Her gods have robbed her of her future and have ruined her personhood. False gods always promise to give to us the life we always dream of. For a time we become convinced they will fulfill their promise, but false gods never fulfill their promises. They always fail us.

If we persist in following false gods such as money, power, sex, and self we will end up like Gomer. That is our sure end, enslaved, disillusioned, ruined, lost. Gomer's value in the world she has chosen for herself has plummeted. Her own world does not even esteem her anymore. She is a lowly slave. In fact, Exodus 21 tells us of the monetary value of a slave,

<sup>32</sup> If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver...

Do you catch what Hosea paid for her? The monetary value for the common slave is thirty shekels of silver and Hosea paid fifteen shekels and a measure and one-half of barley. Barley is the least expensive kind of grain. This is a price below the market value of a common slave. This tells us of the scorn now her world is heaping upon Gomer, yet the price also tells us of the cost incurred by Hosea to redeem her. Why didn't Hosea pay the whole price in silver? Why fifteen shekels of silver instead of sixteen or eighteen? I believe the answer is because Hosea took everything in his bank account, everything in his savings, and all he had was fifteen shekels of silver. He was not a wealthy man.

Hosea offered fifteen shekels of silver and Gomer's lover said, "It is not enough!" Hosea rummaged through his cabinets for food that had some value and he came up with a measure and one-half of barley and said, "Here, how about this," and the lover said, "Okay, I will take it." Hosea gave everything in order to purchase his unfaithful wife out of slavery.

Here, in the purchase of Gomer out of slavery, lies a deep and mysterious truth regarding God's love for us. Hosea's actions paint a picture for us of a future work the Son of God would perform, as He died upon the cross, purchasing us out of slavery to sin by giving His all, by laying down His life, by shedding His own blood. He did so that we could be free from sin's guilt, from sin's enslaving power, from the separate sin creates between us and God. Remember, we are Gomer.

We are ruined by our own unfaithfulness to God. We have become slaves to sin. We have no future. We have no hope, but God demonstrates His love toward us in this,

Romans 5:8b ...that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He paid the price to redeem us out of slavery. He rescues us of our sin by paying an infinite price for our freedom.

This idea of redemption is absolutely essential to the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus. Without God paying a purchase price there would be no Good News. It is troubling that so many Christians today either purposely ignore the Doctrine of Redemption or openly reject it as somehow unworthy of God. Yet, this story teaches us how central the redemption of man by God in the cross of Jesus is to God's plan to rescue us, to reconcile us to Himself, to give us eternal life so that we might know Him intimately and wonderfully.

This theme of redemption runs all through Scripture. Jesus talks about redemption. In Matthew 20, we read,

<sup>28</sup> "*even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*"

Peter talks about redemption, in 1 Peter 1,

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<sup>3</sup> A liquid measure equivalent to half a homer and containing about 5 1/2 bushels.

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

What cost God incurred in order to free us; the price of the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul talks about redemption in his first letter to Titus,

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people...<sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Do you catch that God's redemption does not merely bring us out of slavery and into forgiveness, but it also purifies us? The whole purpose is not to merely take Gomer out of the woeful condition she is in, but the whole purpose is to bring her into a wonderful relationship with Hosea her husband so this woman of dishonor would become a woman of honor and dignity, so that she would be restored to Hosea and to purpose and enjoyment in life. That is the whole issue of redemption and without redemption none of that is possible because we are enslaved.

Hosea 3 is an illustration of John 3,

<sup>16</sup> *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

How did God love the world? He loved it so much that Hosea's purchase of Gomer, going and loving again a wife who consistently was unfaithful and unfaithful and unfaithful, cruel and cruel and cruel to him. God so loved the world. He loved this world of unfaithfulness, this world of idolaters, this world of sinners that He gave His Son as a Redeemer.

Let me share another section of James Boyce's commentary. I cannot improve upon the picture Boyce paints, “We know quite a bit about the selling of a slave in antiquity because much has been written about it. For example, slaves were always sold naked, thus was Gomer put up for sale. Her clothes were removed and the men of the city were there to see her nakedness and to bid for her. God told Hosea to buy his wife back and one man started the bidding, ‘Twelve pieces of silver,’ ‘Thirteen,’ said Hosea. ‘Fourteen pieces of silver,’ and Hosea's bid was, ‘Fifteen.’ The low bidders were beginning to drop out, but one man continued bidding, ‘Fifteen pieces of silver and a bushel of barley,’ was the bid. Hosea said, ‘Fifteen pieces of silver and a bushel and one-half of barley.’ The auctioneer looked around and seeing no more bids said, ‘Sold to Hosea for fifteen pieces of silver and a bushel and one-half of barley.’”

“Does God love like that? Yes, God loves like that. We are Gomer. We are the slaves sold on the auction block of sin. The world bids for us. The world bids fame and wealth and prestige and influence and power, all those things which are the world's currency. But, when all seemed lost, God sent the Lord Jesus Christ His Son into the marketplace to buy us at the cost of His life.

“If you can understand it as an illustration, God was the auctioneer. He said, ‘What am I bid for these poor, hopeless, enslaved sinners?’ Jesus said, ‘I bid the price of my blood,’ and the Father said, ‘Sold to the Lord Jesus Christ for the price of His blood,’ for there was no greater bid than that.”

Are you redeemed? The price has been paid, but are you redeemed? In order to be redeemed, in order to be purchased you must open your heart to the Redeemer and say, “Yes, Lord, redeem me. Your purchase price is sufficient for me. Redeem me. Purchase me out of my slavery and out of my misery.”

In thinking of God's love, I see at least six descriptions in this story to help us to understand more of the nature of God's love. The first is unconditional. Hosea does not love Gomer because of anything Gomer does to merit his love. In fact, Gomer is doing everything to become unworthy of such love. God loves His own people

unconditionally, without anything we do on our part. Someone may say, “Isn’t the condition of repenting of our sin and believe in order to be redeemed?” Yes, but let me ask you, where do you suppose your repentance and your faith come from? No one repents of their sin unless they are granted repentance by God. God gives to us repentance. He gives to us faith and when we repent and believe we are simply taking what God has given to us and applying it. God loves us unconditionally. He gives us the redemption and He gives us repentance and faith and then we act upon it. What an amazing love. The application is for us to live our life knowing we are loved by the King. Do not try to earn God’s love but receive it freely and joyfully every day.

The second word is initiating. Hosea does not wait for Gomer to make the first move. He would have been right to say, “She was the one who left. I will let her be the one to return.” Gomer has forgotten Hosea, but Hosea has not forgotten Gomer. Hosea initiates his love toward her and God always initiates love toward us. Our love for God is always a responding love. It is never an initiating love. We would never love God and we would never seek after Him, not in our own cold, idolatrous heart, if God did not, first, initiate His love toward us. Friend, always remember it was not you who sought after God, but it was God who sought after you. The application is to live your life in praise of God’s love. Wonder about God’s love. It is an amazing thing that He would initiate love with us. Throw yourself into His love everyday.

I believe one essential quality of our sanctification, of our becoming like Christ, is that we would come deeply not only to understand but to experience and to live in the midst of the love of God for us.

The third word is persevering. Hosea persists in loving Gomer even when Gomer has left her love for Hosea. Hosea does not give himself an excuse to stop loving Gomer simply because she stopped loving him. Human love has its limits. God’s love does not.

I was watching a television program and there was a wedding on the program. In the vows the pastor said, “Repeat after me,” and part of the vows said, “We will love, honor, and cherish each other as long as we both shall love.” The traditional phrase is, “as long as we both shall live,” but they changed it because they recognized that to be kind of a crazy thing to say, especially in our world. No one will love as long as we both shall live; we must love as long as we both shall love. That means they will stay committed as long as the warm feeling toward one another abides.

God’s love is not conditional. It is persevering. I love Jesus’ words in John 13, when He tells His disciples,

<sup>1b</sup> ...having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

All the way to the end of time and into eternity, that is how long God’s love abides upon us. The application is simple: live your life like you are forever loved. Do not live in fear that God will abandon you. Live with the knowledge nothing will ever, ever, ever separate you from the love God has for you in Christ, not your sin, not your failing, not your foolishness, not anything in your past, not anything in your future. God’s love is persevering and that is His nature.

The fourth word is redeeming. Hosea paid the purchase price for Gomer so that she could be rid of her past and rid of the permanent consequences of her sinful choices. God wonderfully pays this purchase price for us so that our sinful choices and our idolatry do not plague us and ruin us forever. The application is that we are to live our life like you are God’s and not your own. Live your life like you are God’s in that possession now.

In 1 Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul applies this to the sphere of sexual purity,

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality... <sup>19</sup> ...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

**The second big idea presented in Verse 3 is: God creates a new faithfulness in His people.** Hosea purchases Gomer and he says to her,

<sup>3</sup> And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.”

The fourth word is sanctifying. God’s love is sanctifying. Hoses, when he loves Gomer, he sanctifies her. He pledges to effectively make her a woman of dignity again. He does not purchase her so he can abuse her or so he can use her for sexual pleasure. He purchases her so that she becomes a woman of beauty and worth and loveliness, the woman God created her to be. Hosea tells Gomer she is going to become pure. He tells her there will be a period of time when he will not sleep with her. I believe the reason he tells her this for a period of time is so she will know his love is all about Gomer becoming the person God created her to become. His love is not about his own pleasure, but his love is about Gomer becoming the person God created her to be so for a time they will be celibate in their marriage. Hosea wants Gomer to know he treasures her for who she is and not for what she can offer to him. Hosea is telling her he purchased her in love and so that she can have a different future and a different reality and a different life.

The old Gomer may have heard that and said, “Well, I still want to live in unfaithful ways. I still want to eat raisin cakes as I worship the Baals. I still want to live the life of a prostitute and you cannot stop me. You cannot force me to live a pure life as a wife.” She would have been right. Hosea cannot force her to become faithful. He does not even try. Hosea’s loving purchase does not force Gomer to be faithful, but Hosea’s loving purchase of Gomer does transform her into a new woman and that is the essence of the Gospel.

Once we come to Christ, it is not as though God’s says, “Now I am going to force you to live this kind of life you do not want to live.” What happens when we come to Christ and we are redeemed, we are changed on the inside and we become new creatures so that we now want the kind of life God has created us to live. That is what God’s grace does.

Why do Christians remain faithful to God? It is not because God forces us to act certain ways and not do the things we want to do and do the things we do not want to do. We remain faithful to God because God’s love has transformed us. This, of course, is not to say we do not have a battle with the flesh, but it is to say that battle has been one and we now desire as the driving purpose of our life to live unto God. We know that is where joy is, that is where peace is, and that is where life is. God’s love, when it enters, is a sanctifying love and a transforming love. Paul writes to Titus, in Titus 2,

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age...

Again, it is not the wrath of God that does this. It is the grace of God that does this. That is the reason Paul would say, in Romans 12,

<sup>1a</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God...

God’s love is everything.

**Finally, God promises a joyful future with His people.** I want to preface the reading of the related Scripture with this explanation. What we have had from Chapter 1 through Chapter 3 is Hosea and Gomer illustrating God’s relationship with Israel. In some parts of this, Hosea and Gomer take the central focus and God and Israel fade, always in the background. At other times, that switches and God and Israel take center focus and Hosea’s and Gomer’s relationship is in the background. In Verses 1-3, Hosea and Gomer are our focus. In Verse 4 that switches and the focus is on Israel and her relationship with God,

<sup>4</sup> For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. <sup>5</sup> Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

There will be a time of celibacy. There will be a time during which Israel will not have a king, a priesthood that wears an ephod that helps them to understand what God wants them to do. There will be no temples where there will be sacrifices. There will be a time when the children of Israel will dwell in this state. How long is that state? It only says, “many days.”

From the time in Israel’s history, 722 BC, which is yet future to Hosea, Assyrians come and they conquer the Northern Kingdom of Israel. From that moment on there is not a king over those Twelve Tribes ever again to this present day.

We jump forward and the Southern Kingdom is still surviving on its own but the Babylonians come and they crush the Southern Kingdom, in 586 BC, and take them into captivity. Zedekiah is that last king in Judah. From the time from 586 BC all the way to this present day there has never been a king on the throne of Israel.

We are living in Verse 4. verse 5 has not yet become fulfilled. Because of this prophesy and many prophesies like it the children of Israel are looking for the king. They are seeking David their king. When Jesus is born, we remember what the angel said to Mary,

Luke 1:30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

The angel is asserting to Mary, “This is the Son. Mary, you love the Lord and His Word. You have read Hosea 3:5. This David is in your womb.” Isn’t that amazing?

Remember the wise men?

Matthew 2:1b ... behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?”

There is an expectation of a Davidic king to come who would bring peace and righteousness to the Nation of Israel. This is what caused the disciples to be so perplexed when Jesus told them He was going to die. They were expecting Him to take the throne because that is what the promise is saying this King is going to do. They did not understand there would be a period in between the First Coming of Jesus the Messiah, the King, and The Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah, the King. At the First Coming the King comes to make atonement for sin, to purchase His bride. At The Second Coming, He comes to rule and to reign as David. At that time all of Israel are gathered together and what Verse 5 says will literally take place. The children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will respond to the Messiah, “and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.”

Has Israel come to the state of seeking the Lord? No, it has not and we are still waiting in these many days in Verse 4.

When I was in Israel, we had a guide who was Jewish and his name was Ikey. On one occasion he said, “There is not much difference between the Jew and the Christian. There is only one little word that separates us and that is the word, ‘again’. Christians believe the Messiah is coming again. We believe the Messiah is coming.” In other words, they believe Hosea, that a king is “coming”. They just do not believe Jesus is he.

That is a big difference! One little word separates all of eternity. It separates life with God from condemnation from God. It separates Heaven in relationship and Hell in destruction. It is a huge word!

At the First Coming Jesus purchased with His blood His people. At The Second Coming what is going to take place is all of Israel is going to respond to Him.



The last word regarding God's love is this: effective. Is it possible that Israel would never return to the Lord, would never seek Him, would never embrace the new David, Jesus the Greater David, as their King? Is it possible God would forever remain the spurned, faithful husband whose bride, Israel, never returns to Him? The answer is: NO! It is not because Israel has a softness and some faithfulness and is not totally hard. That is not the reason why it is not possible. It is not possible because God's love is always an effective love. God's love always produces the effect God purposes. God will effectively restore His own people, Israel, into right relationship with Himself.

As Christian's we are grafted into this wonderful story. As Gentiles we get to be a part of the joy and the promises brought about through them Messiah's redemptive work for us. So, the offer is made to all, but beloved, as Christians, I believe we should love Israel because God loves Israel.

One of the reasons there has been anti-Semitism by Gentile Christians over the centuries is because there has been a denial of this doctrine of God's sovereign and effective love. Christians, over centuries, have become angry with Gomer, at the unfaithfulness of an unfaithful wife, and instead of entering into the heart of the story and see the point is not Gomer's rejection, but the point is Hosea's effective love so that we rejoice that God ultimately wins His people to Himself. And the Gentiles, we, are all a part of that as well.

The message is God's persevering love transforms an unfaithful people into faithful worshippers. Has God's love entered into your heart and transformed you into a worshipper?

I conclude with the words, again, from James Boyce's commentary. I have found them so moving and so beautiful, "Remember it was not we who sought Him; it was He who sought us and who joined us to Himself through spiritual marriage. He cornered us and He won our love. Then He brought us to that moment when we stood with Him before the Father and we recited all those spiritual vows that made us His for an eternity. He took the vows first of all, 'I, Jesus, take thee sinner to be my wedded wife and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy loving and faithful Savior and Bridegroom, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, for this life and for all eternity.'" And we looked up into His face and we said after Him, "I, sinner, take Thee Jesus to be my Savior and my Lord. I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy loving and faithful bride, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, for this life and for all eternity." Thus, we took His name and we became His. Before we were "Miss Sinner." Now we have become "Mrs. Christian."

Have you done that? Have you heard the pledge of God to love you and have you responded, "Yes, I need Your love and I now commit from this day forward to receive Your love, to rejoice in Your love, and to love You in return, right now and on into eternity." That is the essence of life and the amazing nature of God's love.