

# A Wilderness Experience

Hosea 2:14-3:5

Read Hosea 2:14-17.

1. Verse 14 starts with the word “therefore.” Go back and record the phrases that come before and after the word “therefore.”

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**Forgot** – to forget, ignore, wither, to cease to care

2. **THINK:** Have you ever experienced being forgotten by someone, someone who just stopped caring about you? How did you respond?

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Israel had forgotten God and all the things He had done for them, choosing instead to play the harlot with pagan gods and to indulge in fleshly desires that could do no good for them.

3. How did God choose to respond to those who had forgotten Him? (v. 14a)

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4. **THINK:** What do you think of when you think of the word “allure”?
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“This is a singular kind of power: ‘I will allure her;’ not, ‘I will drive her’ not even, ‘I will draw her,’ or, ‘I will drag her;’ or, ‘I will force her.’ No, ‘I will allure her.’ It is a very remarkable word, and it teaches us the allurements of love surpasses in power all other forces. That is how the devil ruins us; he tempts us with honeyed words, sweet utterances, with the baits of pleasure and the like; and the Lord in mercy determines that, in all truthfulness, He will outbid the devil, and He will win us to Himself by fascinations, enticements, and allurements which shall be stronger than any force of resistance we may offer. This is a wonderfully precious word: ‘I will allure her.’”

- Charles Spurgeon

5. How did God intend to allure Israel? (v. 14b, 14c, 15a, 15b)

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6. First, God would bring Israel into the wilderness. Read the following verses and record what you learn about the events that led to Israel's first experience in the wilderness.

Exodus 2:23-25 \_\_\_\_\_

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Exodus 12:29-32 \_\_\_\_\_

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Exodus 14:5-7, 9, 21-22, 30-31 \_\_\_\_\_

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Exodus 19:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

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Numbers 13:1-2, 27-31, 14:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

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Numbers 14:26-27, 33 \_\_\_\_\_

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7. As a result, the Israelites spent 40 years in the Wilderness of Sin. How did God use the time in the wilderness to refine the people? (Deuteronomy 8:2-10)

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8. What warning did the Lord give them before they entered the Promised Land? And what would happen if they didn't heed His warning? (Deuteronomy 8:11-20)

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They had come full circle and had forgotten the Lord. Now, He would allure them back into a right relationship with Him by bringing them back into the wilderness.

9. **THINK:** Record the details of a time when God used a wilderness experience to bring about growth in your relationship with Him?

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Hosea 2:14 tells us that God intended to speak comfort to Israel in the wilderness.

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| <b><i>Speak comfort</i></b> – of joy and gladness, speak unto the heart (kindly) |
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- 10: **THINK HARDER:** How has God spoken comfort to you during your wilderness experiences?

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Israel was on the verge of being scattered by the Assyrian Army. The Northern Kingdom would cease to exist as a nation. In these verses, God looks forward to the end of a very long wilderness experience (one that is still ongoing) and makes promises to return the land to Israel and to transform the Valley of Achor (trouble) into a door of hope at His Second Coming.

The Valley of Achor refers to another troubled time in Israel's past, where a man by the name of Achan directly disobeyed God while the Israelites were conquering the Promised Land. The Israelites would face three Canaanite cities as they entered the Promised Land. Victory over Jericho (which represented the world) would divide the land and Canaan's resources. God handed them the Jericho victory, just like Christ hands us salvation through His death on the cross as payment for our sins. Next, they

would face Ai. A small city that appeared easy to defeat after facing Jericho. Full of pride, Israel took on Ai (which represents our fleshly desires) without asking for God's help or direction and failed. Upon failing, Joshua called upon God, Who told Joshua they would have to deal with the sin in their camp before victory over Ai (the flesh) would be possible.

11. Read the following passages and summarize what happened in the Valley of Achor.

Joshua 7:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Joshua 7:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Joshua 7:10-12 \_\_\_\_\_

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Joshua 7:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_

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Joshua 7:22-26 \_\_\_\_\_

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We receive salvation and freedom from the bondage of sin through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, but if we don't take dealing with our flesh seriously, we will forget God and stop following after Him.

Achan's sin was the first recorded sin after entering the Promised Land. This affected all of Israel, just as our own sin affects the entire body of Christ, hinders our witness, and diminishes the glory we should be bringing to God to draw others to Him.

12. Take a moment and pray. Ask the Lord to show you if you have any sin that you need to deal with before you can move forward with Him.

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13. Record the promise of Isaiah 65:10.

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14. How would their relationship with God change through this wilderness experience? (Hosea 2:16)

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15. **THINK:** Without looking at the definition below, what do you think of when you hear the word “master”?

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16. **THINK HARDER:** How do you think the character of God (YHWH) would be displayed in the role of a husband?

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| <b>Master</b> – Baali = my lord, a deity in the northern kingdom, variation of the name Baal |
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The word “master” in verse 16 is *Baali*, meaning “my lord,” Baal, a deity worshipped in the northern kingdom. So, verse 16 could read, “And it shall be, in that day,” says the Lord, “That you will call Me, ‘My Husband,’ and no longer call Me ‘my Baal’.”

17. **THINK EVEN HARDER:** What do you think is being articulated in this verse about Israel’s view of YWYH and Baal before their wilderness experience and after their wilderness experience?

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18. What is the primary role of a husband in a godly marriage?

Ephesians 5:25 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:26 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 3:7 \_\_\_\_\_

19. What role does the wife play in a godly marriage?

Proverbs 12:4 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:22 \_\_\_\_\_

Titus 2:4-5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Crown** – figure of honor

**Submit/obey** – to subject oneself, to obey; to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice: absolutely

**Love** – fond of; affectionate

20. What is at the root of every happy and lasting marriage?

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Read Hosea 2:18-23.

As a reminder, God is about to scatter the northern kingdom of Israel. They have chased after other gods and forgotten Him. He will use this wilderness experience to remind and allure Israel back into right relationship with Him. This restoration of Husband and wife (Israel) will take place when Israel recognizes Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 13:9) at the end of the Tribulation.

21. Describe the additional blessings Israel will enjoy at this time of restoration. (v. 18)

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22. This restoration will result in literal transformations in how nations and animals behave. Do some research and describe a few of the transformations we can experience in a restored relationship with God.

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23. This will be a once-and-for-all restoration for Israel. Never again will they be separated from God. What will be the foundation of this new marriage? (v. 19-20)

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24. **THINK:** In what ways are these the foundation of your relationship with God?

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25. Go back and read Hosea 2:1-13, then record the specific things the Lord intends to redeem during the Millennium (the 1,000-year reign of Christ in Jerusalem, following the 7-year Tribulation) by comparing these verses with Hosea 2:21-23.

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26. Go back to verse 14 and record the “I will” statements that you see in verses 14-23.

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27. What does this teach you about God’s character?

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Read Hosea 3:1-5.

Stepping back, we see that Hosea is experiencing problems of his own in his relationship with his wife. They, too, have been separated.

28. What does God ask Hosea to do, and how does he respond? (v. 1-2)

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29. **THINK:** What do you think is particularly extravagant about Hosea's actions, considering that Gomer was his wife?

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30. What would Israel face in the near future, and what would this **really** mean for Israel? (v. 4)

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31. What can Israel hope for in the future when their separation from God comes to an end? (v. 5)

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32. Consider your current relationship with the Lord. Are you playing the harlot with other gods? Are you giving credit that is due to Him to someone or something other than Him, or are you submitting to Him and yielding your will to His will? Record what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you and what steps you will take to move forward.

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# A Closer Look at “You will call me Husband”

Hosea 2:16

Israel was chosen and loved by God, but they were unfaithful to Him through idolatry.

33. Read Jeremiah 31:32 and Isaiah 54:5. How is God described?

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Throughout the Old Testament, Israel is portrayed as a wife and God as her Husband.

34. Read Jeremiah 3:1. What is the first question that is asked?

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35. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4. This was the Mosaic Law given to Israel regarding an unfaithful wife whose husband divorces her.

a. Describe the series of events surrounding this woman. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. What command was given to the first husband if the wife returned? \_\_\_\_\_

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c. Therefore, what would have been the answer to the question in Jeremiah 3:1?

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36. Read Jeremiah 3:8a, b. What did God do?

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It seems, according to the Law, that Israel was in a hopeless situation. Divorced from God with no hope of reconciliation.

But ... God’s mercy and His grace interceded. Always.

37. Read Jeremiah 3:12. What does God say?

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38. Ponder the Deuteronomy and Jeremiah verses you have just read and this week's study in Hosea. What do you learn about God from these passages?

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In Chapter 1, God told Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute. We learned in chapter 3 that she did not stay faithful to Hosea and moved from prostitute to adulteress. Still, the Lord told Hosea to find her and bring her back. This was meant to show the greatness of God's grace: "Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they also commit adultery." (Hosea 3:1)

39. Read through Hosea 2:14-20. Write down everything in this passage that speaks of a husband/wife relationship.

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A marriage is a covenant relationship characterized by exclusive, committed, and intimate love between a man and a woman. God calls Himself Husband to Israel because of their covenant relationship. Hosea offers a powerful image of God's deep, unending love for His covenant people.

God loves you too, and sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem you from your sins and promise you eternal life with Him.

40. Read Hebrews 9:15. What hope does this bring you?

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Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

- Ephesians 5:24-27

41. Commit today to be faithful to God, Who has called you to Himself.

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