

The Prayer of Repentance & the Promise of Restoration

Hosea 14:1-9

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Introduction: This morning we watched as God took Israel “to court,” giving her an indictment & then describing the indications of her downfall. Yet the restoration of Israel is also prophesied by Hosea in chapter 14 that we come to tonight. Judgment is about to fall upon the Northern Kingdom. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians conquered Israel & took many captives into exile while also repopulating Samaria with captives from other conquered nations (see II Kings 17:23-24 & cf. Hosea 11:5). Hosea declares here in chapter 14 the future confession of sin by the people of Israel which will result in the rapid restoration of the nation. We might outline the chapter simply as the prayer of repentance (:1-3) & the promise of restoration (:4-9).

I. The **prayer** of **repentance** (note God’s command) (:1-3)

A. “Return” (:1) >

1. The command: to turn towards God; to direct their heart & mind to Him.
2. The cause: “...*thou hast fallen by thine iniquity*” – review 4:1-11 & 8:7 & cf. Gal. 6:7-8.

B. “Repent” (:2, “*Take with you words...*”) >

1. This is not a return with sacrifices or good works; rather with words.
2. “*Take away all iniquity*” – the confession of sin & guilt (cf. Psalm 51).
3. “*Receive us graciously*” – literally, “accept the good” which means “accept the only good thing that we are able to bring, the sacrifice of our lips” (Keil).
4. “*We render the calves of our lips*” – the prayer of confession & words of praise offered as a thank-offering.

C. “Rely” (:3) >

1. Rely not on that which cannot save:
 - a. “*Asshur*” – Assyria; see 5:13.
 - b. “*Horses*” – primarily from Egypt.
 - c. “*Works of our hands, Ye are our gods*” – their idols (cf. 8:6 & 13:2).
2. Rely on the only One who can save:
 - a. “*In Thee*” – in God alone is mercy & salvation to be found.
 - b. “*The fatherless find mercy*” - orphans. Note God’s command & compassion concerning orphans in Exodus 22:22 & Deuteronomy 10:18.

II. The **promise** of **restoration** (note God’s promises) (:4-8)

A. The declaration of forgiveness (:4) >

1. “*I will heal their backsliding*”:
 - a. Literally, the word “*backsliding*” is “apostasy.” See Proverbs 14:14.
 - b. The O.T. prophets often spoke of sin as a sickness & renewal as healing.
2. “*I will love them freely*”:
 - a. Love them voluntarily; on His own accord; without merit on their part.
 - b. God’s anger is turned away because of their repentance.

B. The descriptions of forgiveness (:5-7) >

1. There will be **fertility**:
 - a. Refreshing dew (vital source of water). See Lamentations 3:22-23.
 - b. Producing plant ("*lily*" – multiplies rapidly).
2. There will be **stability**:
 - a. "*Roots of Lebanon*" – cedar trees noted for their firmness & durability.
 - b. "*Branches shall spread*" – sturdy branches.
3. There will be **visibility**:
 - a. "*Beauty*" – of the olive tree.
 - b. "*Olive tree*" – evergreen; branches never bare of leaves.
4. There will be **desirability**:
 - a. "*Smell as Lebanon*" – aromatic plants & fragrant flowers.
 - b. "*The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon*" – pervading fragrance.

Summary: Israel shall return to her land with fruitfulness & prosperity.

Application: In N.T. terms, we have the riches of His grace – I Timothy 6:17 & Eph. 1:3-14.

C. The determination from forgiveness (:8) >

1. Is **Ephraim** speaking here?
 - a. Declaring no longer to have anything to do with idols (see 3:4-5).
 - b. "*I have heard Him & observed Him*" – true worship of the Lord.
 - c. "*I am like a green fir tree*" – an evergreen, always producing.
- *2. Is **God** speaking here?
 - a. God says to Ephraim, "*What have I to do any more with idols?*" – God doesn't, neither should Ephraim (again see 3:4-5).
 - b. God has heard & observed Ephraim; He has witnessed their repentance.
 - c. God promises His blessings – "*From Me is thy fruit found*" (& cf. John 15:1-8).

Conclusion: Verse 9 is Hosea's conclusion. He speaks for the Lord: "The Lord has made His case, & is justified in punishing Israel for ingratitude & covenant breaking. Yet there is a final appeal for the wise, who understand" (ESV note). The key thought from the morning message & again tonight is the knowledge of God. It is most important to know & understand God – not just to know about God – but to know Him (consider Philippians 3:10). "The surest evidence that a person knows God is when his lifestyle comes into conformity with the standard of God's righteousness" (Jaeggli). True wisdom acknowledges that the ways (commandments) of the Lord are right & ultimately for our benefit. Remember, He who made us knows what is best for us. Unfortunately, those who reject the knowledge of God & His Word shall stumble & fall. There are only 2 choices given here. Return & walk securely or rebel & surely stumble (cf. Deut. 30:19). "The final verse challenges the reader to both proper attitudes & proper actions in connection with the prophecies of Hosea. The attitude of the reader should be that of a disciple. Here are words to be learned if one is truly wise. By implication, only a fool would ignore their great value" (Stuart). Would you be considered wise & prudent tonight?