

**Hosea 14:1 ¶ O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.**

**Hosea 14:2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.**

The prophet closes his message from the LORD with a call for Israel to repent of their sins and return to covenant relationship with “the LORD thy God.” He reminds them that it is their sins that are bringing about their ruin. They need to publicly repent of their sins and ask for God’s forgiveness. They need to appeal to God’s grace and mercy. They need to promise to change their wicked ways and offer Him the sacrifice of praise. The prophet is imploring the people to change their wicked ways for ways of worship that will honor YHWH.

I am reminded of the words of the writer of Hebrews:

*Hebrews 13:15 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”*

**Hosea 14:3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.**

In rebellion the people of Israel had turned to other mighty nations such as Assyria for help rather than submit to Almighty God. They needed to confess that they know that neither men nor horses nor false gods can protect or deliver them from their enemies.

God was a recognized as the Father of Israel.

*1 Chronicles 29:10 “Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.”*

*Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

In turning away from God, His people had effectively orphaned themselves. God is a faithful Father, however; and His heart is tender toward the fatherless and those that seek Him.

*Psalms 68:5 “A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.”*

*Psalms 146:9 “The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.”*

*Jeremiah 29:13 “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”*

**Hosea 14:4 ¶ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.**

The LORD is affirming through His prophet that He will once again make His people spiritually whole. When He does, He will love them freely, willingly, bountifully (all from the Hebrew). God does not hold a grudge; when He forgives, He forgets. David worded it beautifully and the writer of Hebrews affirms that truth.

*Psalms 103:8–12 “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”*

*Hebrews 8:10–12 “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”*

**Hosea 14:5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.**

**Hosea 14:6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.**

**Hosea 14:7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.**

These are words to live for to the believing remnant of Israel. The time is coming when His people will worship Him and enjoy the benefits of His many blessings. They will once again be a fruitful and prosperous nation.

Lebanon was known for its great cedar trees. To “cast forth his roots like Lebanon” is to paint a picture of a strong people that are rooted securely in their land. The blessings of Israel will spill over to benefit other nations. The whole word picture is one of great prosperity.

**Hosea 14:8 ¶ Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.**

At this time in Israel’s future, God’s people will wonder why they ever put any credence to idols and the false gods they represented. God will assure them that He hears their heart; He has inspected them and found their repentance to be sincere. He assures them that He will make them fruitful and prosperous.

**Hosea 14:9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.**

The prophet closes with a couple of questions and answers. When he asks who is wise, he immediately answers that it is he who is discerning and is willing to learn from their mistakes. Who is prudent? He who acts on what he has learned.

He ends with a declaration that everything the LORD does is right! The lawful, righteous man will live according to God's revealed will; the Hebrew includes the idea of pursuit—He will pursue a righteous lifestyle. Those who choose to rebel against God and live according to the flesh will end up in ruin.

I am reminded of Paul's word to the Romans.

*Romans 8:1–10 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*

Only by God's enablement can we hope live righteously.